

# COLUMBUS AND THE Valley Magazine

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## Five Under 40

by Cyndy Cerbin

- A Doogie Howser-type** who saves face for cancer patients.
- A one-time cowboy** now holding the reins of a bank.
- A numbers geek** in charge of writers and editors.
- A journalist** who went from the news desk to the hospital.
- A real estate agent** whose life lessons were learned in a flower shop.



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These fascinating people make up the inaugural class of Columbus and the Valley's Five Under 40 for 2008. They represent just a handful of the rising stars who are taking our community to new heights. While their jobs and backgrounds are diverse, they have much in common: they're young, energetic, focused and passionate about making their world a better place.

Recently, we sent out the call to our readers, asking them to nominate people they considered worthy candidates for our Five Under 40. We left the qualifications wide open, but asked letter writers to tell us how their candidates were making a mark in the Chattahoochee Valley in four key areas: family, business, faith and community service.

What we learned from the response is that our community has no shortage of high-charged individuals with unstoppable potential. Among them are the people we selected for our first profile: Amy Adams, Billy Blanchard, Travis Chambers, Maria Kent and Dr. Josh Lane. We asked them some common questions about the books they're reading and what they do for fun, but their answers to questions like "What's missing in Columbus?" reveal the variety of perspectives that can be found in our young leaders. These are the people to watch.

**Amy Adams, 32**  
Director of Communications, St. Francis Hospital  
Husband: Matt | Hometown: Marietta, Georgia  
Education: University of Mississippi

Just a few years ago, Amy Adams' alarm clock rang at 3:15 a.m. every weekday. With the selection of just the right outfit and nearly every hair in place, she'd head to work. Within three hours, thousands of other people getting ready for work would be counting on her to get their day started right.

Adams was a television news anchor, assigned to the early morning and noon newscasts on Columbus' CBS affiliate, WRBL. She had the requisite mix of...

**Billy Blanchard, 35**  
Executive Vice President - Retail Banking, Columbus Bank & Trust  
Wife: Olivia; Children: Russell, 8; Betsy, 6; Walter, 3  
Hometown: Columbus | Education: Berry College

What do most sons of bankers do right after college? Go work for Dad.

Not this one. Billy Blanchard had just graduated from Berry College in Rome, Ga., when an older and presumably wiser friend gave him some advice: Go do something you won't be able to do after you're married and have a career.

So this son of a banker threw caution to the wind and moved west. He got a job at Lost Valley Ranch in Colorado, grooming and saddling horses, leading...

**Travis Chambers, 36**

CEO and Founder, ERA Elite Ventures Realty

Wife: Kia; Children: Travis II, 15; Tyler, 9; Taylor, 5

Hometown: Columbus | Education: Albany State University, Troy State University

When Travis Chambers was in high school, his mother—a longtime nurse—decided to change direction and go into business for herself. She opened a flower shop on Third Avenue. On the day she opened, there were two flowers in the shop.

The son, who lacked his mother's vision, laughed. "Mom, what is this? This is no flower shop!" But he was an obedient son, and left school every day...

**Maria Kent, 39**

Director of Information Management, TSYS

Husband: Steven; Daughter: Celia, 6

Hometown: Chicago, Illinois | Education: University of Georgia

Maria Kent's father is Italian. Her mother's not, but her father made sure she learned how to cook like one.

Her mother then taught Kent the tools of the trade and the staples of the pantry, like garlic and cheese. Trouble was, when Kent's family first moved to Columbus some 24 years ago...

**Joshua Lane, 35**

Dermatologist, Mohs Surgeon

Wife: Tanda | Hometown: Nashville, Tenn.

Education: Vanderbilt University, Mercer University, Columbus State University

Dr. Josh Lane is a stranger to most folks around here. He grew up in Macon and moved to Columbus less than a year ago. But he's no stranger among dermatologists. At the tender age of 35 Lane already has written three textbooks and published more than 100 articles and papers and earned widespread respect from his peers.

Lane's specialty is Mohs surgery, an advanced and especially effective procedure for treating...

*Now that we've reeled you in, catch the rest of this and many other intriguing local stories and columns in the current issue of Columbus and the Valley Magazine. [Click here to find a retail outlet near you](#), or [subscribe online](#) so you'll never miss a word.*

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