

# Meet the South Carolina Chamber Small Business Committee

**Established to ensure that the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce communicates the value and importance of small businesses, the Small Business Committee is charged with determining how the Chamber's current activities can best serve small businesses. It also makes recommendations to the Chamber's Board of Directors on how the Chamber can advocate on behalf of and provide greater recognition to small businesses. If you would like to contact any of the following Committee members, please contact Roxie Williamson at the Chamber, 803-799-4601.**

## Chuck Bundy



When Chuck Bundy flew airplanes at age 17, he called himself an "airport junkie." Today, as the South Carolina Department of Commerce Small Business Ombudsman and senior manager in the department's Business Solutions Division, he is working to make sure that South Carolina's small business community is flying high.

The goal of the Small Business Ombudsman's Office is to support the growth of quality small and mid-sized businesses and entrepreneurial development across South Carolina through both legislative and policy initiatives and direct company contact.

"There's a need to always look at what the government can provide small businesses and also to constantly look at what important to them," he said. "The Small Business Committee is a forum for that."

## Mia Butler



Mia Butler's first "real job" was as a cashier at Bi-Lo at age 15, but she said it was her family funeral home that taught her the customer service and personal relations skills that she uses today.

As principal of McLeod Butler Communications LLC in Columbia, Butler's professional experience includes launching and directing a statewide program for former South Carolina Attorney General Charlie Condon, directing one of the largest programs within the South Carolina Governor's Office of Executive Policies & Programs, and writing and implementing the minority outreach portion of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) under the leadership and direction of Chernoff Newman.

Butler strives to keep abreast of issues, she said, but "it is equally important for me to advocate on behalf of small businesses and to help develop initiatives that will spur economic growth opportunities."

## Ken Carey



Born at Shaw Air Force Base in Sumter, Ken Carey grew up in Spain, New York, Georgia, and South Carolina. His time in Spain gave him a great deal of respect

for the Hispanic culture and for the new immigrants who are here legally trying to assimilate into our society.

Carey is the owner of Agil Staff, a Columbia-based employment agency specializing in the placement of bilingual professionals, the Hispanic workforce, and other hard-to-find people.

"I got involved with the Small Business Committee because I am in the unique position of being a small business that helps other small businesses," he said. "As a result, I have a very broad perspective on the small business community as a whole, and I'd like to take steps to increase opportunities and profits for our state."

**Susan Chavis** – Program Support Assistant, U.S. Small Business Administration

## Nancy Cheek, Ed.D.



Nancy Cheek is a linguist and an educator whose professional activities include teacher education, language program administration, curriculum development, and education consulting. She is co-owner of Language Espresso LLC with her husband Edison Cheek, an intercultural specialist.

Language Espresso helps individuals and businesses communicate globally through instruction in major world languages. The business has identified and trained a team of native speakers who teach a variety of world languages, including English, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish, and Ukrainian. Dr. Cheek said the major issue being dealt with now is "additive bilingualism."

"With the tremendous increase in the non-English speaking work force in South Carolina, we are encouraging employers to offer English language instruction onsite," she said. "Having a common language translates to improved safety and increased efficiency."

## Janet W. Christy



When Janet Christy was a teenager, she wanted to be a dancer when she grew up. But like many kids with dreams, things change.

"I got involved in business through education and evolved more than made a decision. I could

make a bigger difference in the business world than as a dancer," she said. "And I didn't live in New York."

Christy went on to become the founder and president of Greer-based Leverage & Development LLC, a consulting firm that helps women and minority owned businesses use their status to their service. She also works with government entities and non-profits in the development of programs for entrepreneurs and Women/Minority Business Enterprises.

Christy said being a member of the Small Business Committee allows her to funnel the information she collects from the individual businesses she works with to the Small Business Committee so they can pass relevant information on to the small business community.

## Phyllis Copeland

Born and reared in Augusta, Phyllis Copland has worked at the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control for 18 years, with the last nine of those in her current position as small business ombudsman. She works to provide free technical assistance on permitting and compliance issues and to advocate for small business in regulatory discussions that may impact small businesses.

In this capacity, Copeland is able to make sure important environmental issues are represented on the Small Business Committee.

"Participation on the committee allows me the opportunity to provide outreach on environmental issues that impact small businesses," she said. "I would like to see a renewed effort to provide information to new business start-ups."

## Eric Davis



Born in Cincinnati, Eric Davis opened FutureTech Enterprises Inc., a computer consulting company, in 1988. Davis now has someone else managing the business so he can focus on his duties as president/CEO of the Better Business Bureau in Columbia. He is responsible for managing the operations to ensure the Bureau reaches its goal of promoting trust in the marketplace.

Davis said he hopes his experience with his own business can allow him to provide insight to the Small Business Committee. He said he feels

South Carolina has a lot to offer to those starting small businesses, citing the simplicity of getting a business set up through South Carolina Business One Stop and a well-managed Department of Revenue.

**Elliott E. Franks III**



Elliott Franks is president and chief executive officer of the South Carolina Jobs-Economic Development Authority (JEDA). The mission of JEDA is to enhance the business and economic climate of the state through loans, investments, exportation of goods, and the promotion of services and capital revenue produced within the state. JEDA seeks to provide innovative financial direction and offer products and tools to promote growth and competitiveness among businesses, create jobs, and improve living conditions in South Carolina.

"My experiences gained over 26 years at JEDA and the Governor's Office and seven years as a small businessman hopefully can be valuable to our committee and the state's small business community," he said. "I would like the committee to be a stronger advocate for legislation geared to support small businesses."

**Patrick M. Gartland**



Pat Gartland is the Southeast Regional Advocate of Region 4 of the Small Business Administration, covering Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. In this position, he identifies new issues for small business owners and monitors the impact of federal and state policies on small business at the local level to develop programs and policies that encourage entrepreneurial success.

Before joining the SBA, Gartland served as the Regional and Public Affairs Director for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Compared with numerous other states, Gartland said the climate for small business in South Carolina is phenomenal.

Gartland attended the University of Alabama on a football scholarship and went on to play with Joe Namath under the coaching of the legendary Paul "Bear" Bryant. He served in the U.S. Army for more than a decade and is a Vietnam veteran.

**Dennis Hempstead**



While his father was in the military, Dennis Hempstead spent the early part of his life in Japan, where he hopes to take his children one day.

With almost 27 years of experience in people management, half of that in the hosiery industry, where he managed in a manufacturing setting, Hempstead was able to lower production costs and make labor more efficient through better quality systems. These skills transferred into the company CCS of South Carolina (formerly Carpet Care Specialist), of which he is a co-founder, president, and CEO.

As president of Clean World USA, a janitorial business in Florence that employs 150 people, Hempstead said, "I really wanted to be a representative of the Pee Dee area and make sure we're involved in the Small Business Committee."

**Leslie Hoover**

Leslie Hoover, IRS stakeholder field liaison, was born near her grandfather's ranch in northwestern Kansas. As a child, she wanted to be an artist, but went on to become a teacher working in schools in Charleston and San Diego.

Hoover's experience with the IRS gave her plenty of reasons to join the Small Business Committee.

"When I was a revenue agent, I saw businesses fail because they did not comply with their income tax filing, withholding, and paying requirements," she said. "The South Carolina Small Business Committee is comprised of business owners and representatives of non-profit and governmental agencies who want small businesses in South Carolina to succeed."

**J. Thomas (Tom) Ledbetter Jr.**

Tom Ledbetter has a strong belief that explains his involvement with the Small Business Committee.

"I'm convinced that the long-term growth of South Carolina is going to be sustained by businesses with 20 or fewer people," he said.

A management professional with 30 years' experience in the rapidly changing advanced manufacturing/technology development sector, Ledbetter first moved to South Carolina in 1988 to be plant manager at Pirelli. Since 2001, he has been president of his own company, Next Phase Management LLC, which offers a wide range of consulting services to small and mid-size businesses. He joined Midlands Technical College in 2003, most recently being named executive director of the Enterprise Campus.

**Gerry S. Madison**



A Brooklyn native, Gerry Madison migrated to South Carolina 30 years ago and quickly learned to love the state's family oriented environment.

Currently serving as the director of the Small and Minority Division of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce, she coordinates and facilitates a six-week course in cultural diversity, called "Building Bridges," which enables the community to change attitudes through education and consciousness-raising. She also manages Leadership Florence.

Madison said being a member of the Small Business Committee allows her to bring the business issues going on throughout the state back to the Florence community.

**Jonathan Marcy**



Jonathan Marcy, owner of Management Advisory Services in Irmo, was raised in remote town in the mountains of Honduras. His parents, New England na-

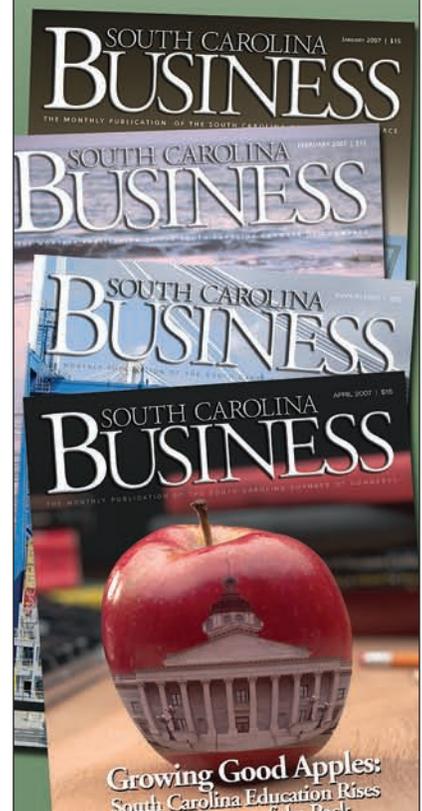
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tives, were missionaries, and his family lived in a house that had no hot water and limited electricity.

With 31 years of experience in engineering, manufacturing, and human resources, along with degrees in business and an MBA, Marcy is a business consultant and trainer with extensive training in organizational learning and development at all levels.

An active member of the Small Business Committee, Marcy has gotten involved in the effort to bring about workers' comp reform.

"As a businessman in the community, I feel it's important for me to give back to the community," he said.

#### Patrick Mason



Born and raised on a Minnesota horse farm, Patrick Mason first was recruited to South Carolina in 1983 to develop condominiums for U.S. Capital Corporation.

In 1986, Mason formed American Lodging Resources Inc., a consulting firm specializing in research, lead generation, and "place marketing" for the hospitality, real estate, and tourism industries. Within a year, he formed an alliance between the private sector and state government to measure the economic impact of in-migration and to position the Carolinas to attract affluent newcomers of all ages. That division is now called the Center for Carolina Living (CFCL), which produces the CarolinaLiving.com Guide to Relocation and Retirement.

"We carry a big stick in that our Web site and Carolina Living will be used by over a million people bringing investment to the state," Mason said.

#### Henry J. McWhite

Born in Pamplico, Henry McWhite has had five small businesses of his own through the years, including a swimming pool repair and remodeling business, a travel business, a consulting business, a business coaching operation, and an equity trading business.

As a semi-retired business coach, McWhite began his business career with IBM Corporation, where he worked for 18 years. He has held management and executive positions in two Fortune 500 companies and participated in the formation of three successful start-up companies.

McWhite said he was introduced to the Small Business Committee by fellow member Gerry Madison, who introduced him to the importance of following legislation at the state level.

With the Marion County Small Business Incubator, McWhite helps small businesses overcome the hurdles of financial management and poor management, which often plague small businesses.

#### Theresa B. Singleton

Columbia native Theresa Singleton had her first introduction to the business world when she was a teenager. Working in a dress factory enabled her to see the free enterprise system in action.

Today, as deputy district director for the South Carolina Office of the SBA, Singleton works to provide oversight to two major grant recipients, the Small Business Development Center and the S.C. Women's Business Center.

"The work we do for small business is so very important when you consider that approximately 98 percent of all businesses in the U.S. are small by the SBA's definition; when you consider that small businesses create the most new jobs and innovations in the U.S. and when you realize that all big businesses were once small businesses, then you realize the work we do does make a difference," she said.

#### Hal W. Stevenson

Hal Stevenson first entered the outdoor advertising business in 1983 and started his



own firm the following year. His company, Stevenson Communications, consists of OutdoorAds, an advertising agency that specializes in out-of-home media, Grace Outdoor, an outdoor media management firm, Digital Outdoor, an electronic outdoor media development firm, and Stevenson Development, a media and real estate development firm.

"Some people think of the Chamber as an outlet for large corporations, but, in reality, the majority of Chamber members are small businesses not able to be involved in the process because they are busy running their businesses," he said. "I would like to encourage as many people as possible to participate."

#### Haidee Stith

Haidee Stith is director of the S.C. Women's Business Center, a program of the SC Manufacturing Extension Partnership. She has extensive senior-level experience in both state and federal government and has managed large staffs and multi-million dollar budgets in her many roles over the past 20 years.

Stith said the Small Business Committee allows local businesses throughout the state to have a voice while also helping the state's big businesses.

"If you don't have a good small business climate, you can't support larger businesses," she said.

#### T. Mitchell Watson

As Chairman of the Small Business Committee, Mitch Watson understands the importance of small business in South Carolina.

"We're just trying to address the needs of

small business owners in South Carolina to make more of them successful," he said.

Watson is chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Kennan & Suggs Inc., a Columbia company that offers insurance, employee benefits, and risk management solutions for individuals and businesses in South Carolina and the Southeast.

#### Stan Wetherell

Stan Wetherell's family descended from the Beaver Creek Indian tribe, a South Carolina-



recognized tribe from the lower Edisto River area. Born in Knoxville, Wetherell is the vice president of Sign It Quick, a Columbia company that specializes in signage, marketing, and advertising needs.

Wetherell and his wife, Julie, started the business in 1988 in Charleston with Frank and Theresa Aucoin, with plans for selling the franchise in the Southeast. Wetherell and his wife operate the Columbia location and were the recipients of the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year award for 1994 and the U.S. Small Business Administration South Carolina Small Business of the Year award for 1995.

"I believe the South Carolina Chamber is the No. 1 advocate of South Carolina's large, medium, and small businesses and their employees. The Small Business Committee, however, focuses on issues that directly affect my small business.

#### Brenda Williams

Brenda Williams is business development coordinator at the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, which serves eligible citizens with disabilities to prepare for, engage in, and maintain competitive employment.

She began her career in Sumter as a case service assistant. After earning a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina, she was named production coordinator to help clients working with local businesses in the training center.

In 2003, Williams was asked to begin a new business development pilot program in the Upstate. This program has expanded to include 11 business development positions statewide, with Williams serving as the direct supervisor and statewide coordinator.

"Without having business partners to support our mission, South Carolinians with disabilities could not hope for opportunities in employment," she said. ✪