

On January 16, Rotary Club of Lexington members swapped their lunch plates for the spotlight during a lively mini-media training led by Dan Koett and journalist Jane Davenport from ABC36. The 90-minute session covered the basics of interview etiquette, from handling tough questions to avoiding the dreaded “um” spiral. Participants practiced real-time scenarios, discovering that speaking on behalf of

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ROTARY!

Rotary is equal parts preparation and personality. Why the focus on media skills? Because every Rotarian is a potential ambassador. Whether it’s a quick soundbite or a full interview, being confident and clear helps amplify the incredible work we do as a club. Plus, let’s face it—who doesn’t want to feel like a media pro for a day? Thanks to everyone who joined the fun!



Pictured L-R: Brigitte Blom, Alisha Chaffin, Jenny Schnurr, Peggy Trafton, Jane Davenport, and Lyle Hanna. Not pictured are DG Gridley, Bret Anderson, and Dan Koett.

SIGN, SIGN, EVERYWHERE A (ROTARY) SIGN . . . !

In the not too distant future, our Club’s support of the Gatton Park at Town Branch will no doubt be acknowledged with a sign. Past President Gerry van der Meer recently noted that on his jaunts about town, he discovered numerous signs evidencing Rotary’s role in the history of Lexington. In Gerry’s words: “I mentioned seeing various plaques about our Club’s involvement and contributions in the community with various community projects . . . I knew there was a plaque at Cardinal Hill and many decades ago there

was once a plaque in the children’s waiting area room at UK Children’s Hospital . . . but in patrolling the hallways there recently to find it, I could not, probably because they converted the children’s waiting room to a teenage technology room. . . I will also be sending you next some pictures of veterans Park and a recognition of our involvement there. Of course, there’s the historical marker downtown . . . anyway Rotary has made its presence known in various corners of the city.” Thanks, Gerry, for your sharp eye. Other Rotary signs, anyone?



**Wealth is freedom to create new memories.**

Chris Anderson  
(859) 514-8271  
americantrustwealth.com

**Aging With Grace Fountain of Youth Clubhouse**

Join us as a Member or Volunteer!

www.AgingWithGraceInfo.org

**D. Scott Neal INCORPORATED**  
FEE-ONLY FINANCIAL PLANNING

Scott Neal  
859.254.3036 | DSNEAL.COM

**Susie Basham**  
Senior Real Estate Specialist

Helping you find the right home for the best time of your life!  
859.533.3776  
susie@theagencyky.com

**ALL NEW Website Now Live!**

*Check it out!*

**ROTARYLEXKY.ORG**

SPONSORED BY:

UPCOMING PROGRAMS		UPCOMING EVENTS/ VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
Feb 20	Doing Rotary Differently, No Lunch Meeting	Feb 20	Backpack Pack-Up, God’s Pantry Food Bank, Winchester Road, 1:00pm
Feb 27	Amon Couch, Executive Director, Partners for Rural Impact	Feb 28	Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8-9:30am
Mar 6	Laura Gregory, Watershed Program Director, Kentucky Waterways Alliance	Mar 6	Studio Players, WITNESS FOR PROTECTION, Carriage House Theatre, \$25, 7:30pm
Mar 13	Dr. Maj-Linda Selenica, Associate Director of Outreach & Partnerships, Sanders Brown Center on Aging	Mar 20	Backpack Pack-Up, God’s Pantry Food Bank, Winchester Road, 1:00pm
Mar 20	Doing Rotary Differently, No Lunch Meeting	Mar 28	Early Morning Mixer, 46Solutions, Lexington Green, 8-9:30am
Mar 27	Dr. Rufus Friday, Executive Director, Center for Integrity in News Reporting	Apr 16	Membership Social/Recruitment, Miracle League Field, Shillito Park, 5:00pm
Apr 3	TBA		
Apr 10	DeVone Holt, Muhammad Ali Center		

# The ROTARY Club of Lexington

## WHEEL HORSE

February 13, 2025  
— TODAY’S PROGRAM —

Presiding: President Bret Anderson  
Inspiration, Pledge, & 4 Way Test: Phil Gray  
Introduction of Guests: Michael Morrill  
Introduction of Speaker: Laurel Martin

Speaker: Dr. Demetrus Liggins, Superintendent, Fayette County Public Schools  
Program: Why We are Lucky to Live and Learn in Fayette County  
**Location: The Mane on Main**

**FEBRUARY LUNCH SPONSOR**  
**BRET ANDERSON**

**cohesion**  
Sales & Marketing Solutions

MEET OUR SPEAKER



DR. DEMETRUS LIGGINS

Today’s speaker, Demetrus Liggins, joined Fayette County Public Schools as superintendent in July of 2021. A recent contract extension ensures he will remain in that role until June 30, 2029. He began his career as a high school English and English as a Second Language teacher in Fresno, California, before moving back to Texas to serve as a dual language teacher and later an assistant principal in the Nacogdoches Independent School District. He also served as an elementary school principal in Corsicana Independent School District, a middle school principal in Lancaster Independent School District and in Mansfield Independent School District, and a high school principal in Grand Prairie Independent School District, where he later served as an area superintendent.

Just prior to the move to Lexington, Liggins served for four years as superinten-

dent of schools in Greenville Independent School District, an urban district of roughly 6,000 students outside of Dallas, Texas. Prior to his arrival, Greenville ISD had a “D” rating and faced fiscal challenges. Under his leadership, the district dramatically improved its academic and fiscal performance, earning a “B” overall, and a “Superior” rating for financial management from the Texas Education Agency.

Liggins, who is bilingual, led several innovative world language initiatives in Greenville, including a citywide literacy program in English and Spanish and a dual language program that created a pathway for students to learn academic content in both languages. Other programs initiated during Liggins’ tenure included an elementary STEM academy, an Early College High School where students concurrently earn a high school diploma and an associate degree, and a partnership with Texas A&M Commerce that provides a pathway to college for every Greenville ISD graduate and free tuition for students from low-income families.

In 2020, the National School Public Relations Association tapped Liggins as a Superintendent to Watch for his fast-paced leadership and strong communication skills. He was also spotlighted as an Inspiring Leader by the Texas Association of School Administrators and received the Phi Delta

Kappa Distinguished Leadership Award for Texas A&M University Commerce in 2019.

Liggins served on the Texas Association of School Administrators’ Race, Equity, and Diversity committee, and was one of five finalists statewide for the prestigious H-E-B Outstanding School Board award. He also completed the American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent Certification Program in 2020, as one of only three Texas superintendents in his cohort.

A native of Longview, Texas, Liggins holds a bachelor’s degree in education and master’s degree in English from California State University in Fresno, a master’s degree in education from Stephen F. Austin State University, and a doctorate degree in K-16 educational leadership and policy from the University of Texas-Arlington.

**WELCOME, NEW ROTARIAN**  
**Shawn Barkley**

Contact Information  
Home Address: 3033 Montavesta Road, Lexington, KY 40502  
Email: shawnbarkley13@gmail.com  
Ph: 502-299-5515  
Religion, Ecumenical  
Sponsor: Lyle Hanna

Look for his bio in an upcoming issue  
*The 5th Page.*



ROTARIANS ANDERSON AND ADAMS NAMED  
PAUL HARRIS FELLOWS

In the holiday movie *It's a Wonderful Life*, a bell rings when an angel gets its wings. In Rotary we don't hand out wings or ring bells, but to recognize gifts of \$1,000 to the Rotary International Foundation we do award the donor Paul Harris Fellow status to the sound of applause and with our deep appreciation.

Two weeks ago, Foundation Chair Paul Stanley presented President Bret Anderson with his first (see what we did there, Bret?) Paul Harris Fellow recognition.

Last week, Susan Adams received her second such recognition from the hands of Harding Dawahare, long-time supporter and cheerleader for the Foundation. As we are permitted to do, Susan received her certificate in the name of her mother Joanne Mezger. Susan, we know she is proud; we certainly are.

Well done, Bret and Susan! Learn how you can become a Paul Harris Fellow and support both Rotary's global and local initiatives by visiting [rotary.org](http://rotary.org) or by reaching out to Paul.



ROTARY AND UK STUDENT-ATHLETES: A WINNING TEAM  
FOR SERVICE AND CAREERS



We previously reported that our Club is partnering with UK student-athlete Maddie Eastman as part of the athletic program's intern project. Seeking to further our involvement with this program, Dylan Harper and Peggy Trafton represented the Club at the University of Kentucky's Career Combine at the Longship Club at Kroger Field, with a theme of "Serving others, advancing careers". The Career Combine is an annual career fair for student-athletes to pursue employer connections and career shadowing,

internship, and full-time employment opportunities.

We are currently working to establish a relationship with UK to offer internships primarily in marketing. Maddie is helping us with our website, social media, and graphic design. Attending the Combine allowed us to promote Rotary and this opportunity.

They spoke with severely student athletes about Rotary and what we have to offer and are excited about future possibilities! The Combine featured fifty employers and over 150 student athletes. And, from the accompanying photo, they had a good time doing it!

– Peggy Trafton

The Rotary Club of Lexington  
401 W. Main, Ste. 305  
Lexington, KY 40507  
Phone: 389-8100

2024-2025 OFFICERS

Bret Anderson - President  
Laurel Martin - President-Elect  
Kim Johnson - Past President  
Alisha Chaffin - Secretary  
Eric Brooks - Sergeant-at-Arms  
Chris Anderson - Treasurer  
Peggy Trafton - Executive Director (Staff)  
Trafton@rotarylexky.org  
Jenny Schnurr - Office Assistant (Staff)  
jenny@rotarylexky.org

DIRECTORS

Chris Aldridge (2025) Shawn Lyons (2026)  
Chris Campbell (2025) Brigitte Blom (2027)  
John Wharton (2025) Dylan Harper (2027)  
Susie Basham (2026) Chris Peck (2027)  
Edwin Gibson (2026)

ENDOWMENT BOARD

Paul Chewning - Board President (2025)  
Jamie Schrader - Board Vice-President (2026)  
Mike Baker (2025)  
John Darnell (2025)  
Tom Lester (2025)  
Merl Hackbart (2025)  
Dean Hammond (2026)  
Thom Hathaway (2026)  
Kent Hisle (2026)  
Roger Baird (2027)  
Buzz Carmichael (2027)  
Michael Morrill (2027)  
Carrie Patterson (2027)  
Sharon Reed (2027)  
Chris Anderson - Treasurer  
Bret Anderson - Club President

WHEEL HORSE  
CONTRIBUTORS

Joe Bark Paul Chewning John Meyers  
Robert Mucci Jim Richardson  
Jenny Schnurr Bill Straus Peggy Trafton  
John Wharton, Editor  
Dan Koett, Assistant Editor  
Set up & printing by Lynn Imaging  
Editorial Standards: *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed.

Rotary in Review

THE PRICHARD COMMITTEE'S BIG BOLD FUTURE FOR KENTUCKY EDUCATION

Last week's Rotary meeting featured an insightful presentation by fellow Rotarian Brigitte Blom, President & CEO of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence. Blom shared the latest findings from the committee's Big Bold Future 2025 report, providing a sobering yet motivating look at Kentucky's educational landscape and its ripple effects on the Commonwealth's future.

Blom began by framing education as the foundation for Kentucky's economic and social well-being. The report highlights areas where Kentucky is making strides, as well as critical challenges that require urgent attention. Encouragingly, Kentucky ranks 4th nationally in high school graduation rates and 4th in two-year postsecondary graduation rates. Additionally, the state holds a respectable 12th place ranking in 4th-grade reading proficiency, signaling that early literacy efforts are bearing fruit.

However, Blom didn't shy away from troubling trends highlighted by the report. Kentucky ranks 46th in postsecondary enrollment, household median income, and children living above the poverty line. Even more concerning is the state's 47th place ranking in pre-school enrollment, underscoring significant gaps in early childhood education

access. Blom emphasized that these statistics are not just numbers, they represent real lives and lost potential for thousands of Kentuckians.

One of the most alarming data points revealed a decline in life expectancy, where Kentucky ranks 46th nationally. Blom connected this decline directly to educational attainment, explaining that communities with better-educated populations tend to experience improved health outcomes, economic stability, and civic engagement.

Despite the challenges, Blom's message was one of hope and action. She urged Rotarians and other community leaders to embrace their roles as catalysts for change. The Prichard Committee's recommendations include increasing investments in early childhood education, expanding access to rigorous coursework in K-12 schools, and enhancing support for postsecondary students to improve enrollment and graduation rates.

Blom highlighted local initiatives that are making a difference, such as community-driven efforts to boost kindergarten readiness, parent-led projects enhancing school climate, and civic organizations recruiting volunteers as reading and math tutors. She stressed that while state policy plays a significant role, grass-

roots efforts are equally vital in driving progress. "That's where the real work happens," said Blom.

Her presentation concluded with a call to action, encouraging Rotarians to advocate for policies that prioritize education and to support local programs that address educational inequities. "I want us to own this as Rotarians," she said. "We have a real role here to play on behalf of our state."

Blom's compelling presentation reminded us that Kentucky's future is inextricably linked to the quality of education we provide today. The Big Bold Future report is more than an assessment—it's a roadmap for meaningful change, and it starts with each of us.

– Dan Koett

NEW MEMBER PROPOSAL

The following individual has been proposed for membership in Rotary:

**Andrea "Andie" Bryan**

Classification: Service Industry, Storm Damage Restoration  
Paul Davis Restoration  
Sponsor: Susie Basham

Objections should be made in writing within seven (7) days to The Board of Directors, Rotary Club of Lexington, 401 W. Main Street, Suite 305, Lexington, KY 40507. Objections are kept in strict confidence.



Carpet – Hardwood – Tile  
Vinyl – Rugs – Remnants  
Gordon Patterson  
Carrie Patterson  
(859) 253-0004



CORPORATE FINANCE ASSOCIATES  
**Business Mergers  
and Acquisitions**  
**Patrick Powell**  
859-963-2400



Kimberly V. Johnson  
(859) 971-9479  
Kim.Johnson@OCWFG.com  
**ONECOMMONWEALTH  
FINANCIAL GROUP**

Morgan Stanley

Jim Richardson CFP®, CLTC, CPM®  
Senior Vice President  
Financial Advisor  
444 East Main Street  
Lexington, KY 40507  
+1 859 231-9527  
James.A.Richardson@ms.com  
NMLS #1255648  
© 2021 Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC  
Member SIPC. CRK 3249160 03/21

**DANIEL H. MILLER**  
— ATTORNEY AT LAW —

REAL ESTATE CLOSINGS  
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL  
859.800.9888  
dan.m@bluerocktitle.com  
www.bluerocktitle.com



**Rotary**  
Rotary Club of Lexington, KY



**GATTON PARK**  
ON THE TOWN BRANCH



Frustrated  
with sales and  
marketing?  
**cchesion**  
Sales & Marketing Solutions  
859.492.1533 | banderson@cchesionllc.com  
CohesionLLC.com



**859-253-2601**  
*The best printing team in Lexington.*

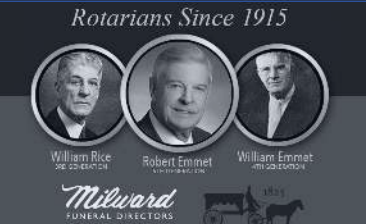


Kelli Newman  
FINANCIAL ADVISOR  
525 Darby Creek  
Suite 250  
Lexington, KY 40509  
859.977.8006 office  
859.899.0527 fax  
859.492.1079 cell  
kelli@alliancefp.net  
Securities and advisory services offered through  
Commonwealth Financial Network®, a Registered  
Investment Adviser.

ADVERTISE VIA

**CALL: 678-904-5476**  
Forge Marketing Group  
Dylan Harper  
**FORGE**

**BESTEN & DIERUF** PLLC  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS



**COMMERCIAL ROOFING INSPECTION  
& MAINTENANCE BUILT-UP SINGLE-PLY  
MULTI-PLY RUBBER MODIFIED SLATE  
LEAK REPAIR EMERGENCY REPAIRS  
METAL FABRICATION & INSTALLATION  
TILE ROOF COATINGS PVC EPDM**  
Greg Meegan 859-233-4546  
TRI-STATE Roofing & Sheet Metal Company



**IT'S NOT JUST ANOTHER  
REAL ESTATE TRANSACTION.  
IT'S YOURS.**  
**SCHRADER**  
COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES, LLC  
859-288-5008  
schradcommercial.com



Experienced. Trustworthy. Assertive. Compassionate.

**859-893-1809**  
realtormarkus@gmail.com

**BUY • SELL • INVEST**

Mark T. Ruddell  
Senior Vice President, Private Banking Manager

**STARLIGHT FINANCIAL GROUP**  
Brian Martin  
Call or Text 606-776-4058  
Carriers  
Anthem, Humana, AARP, Aetna,  
United Healthcare, Wellcare  
Medicare • Life Insurance