

Dr. Andrea M Lockhart, DDS – *New Martinsville Dental*

Business Professional of the Year

Dr. Lockhart never dreamt of becoming a businesswoman. Growing up in New Martinsville, she believed (as many do) that her path in life was to work hard, get an education, then move far away to land her dream career. Despite a growing need for dentists, no local company could afford to hire one by the time she finished dental school. This area had always been home for Dr. Lockhart; if she wanted a local job, she had to create her own opportunity- this led to the creation of New Martinsville Dental. The time spent running her own practice has grown into much more than simply providing dental care. I've nominated Dr. Lockhart for "Business Professional of the Year" in order to recognize the following: the locally significant economic impact of her job creation, her advancement of the local business climate through her work with the Wetzel County Chamber of Commerce, and her offering of a desperately needed service to our local community. Her specialized training in the field of dentistry has allowed Dr. Lockhart to serve her community in more ways than she ever imagined.

From day one, Dr. Lockhart used her dental practice to benefit the overall welfare of her community. In addition to patient care, she spends a large amount of time educating the community on oral health issues through volunteer activities. Her volunteerism has included free back-to-school exams for Tyler County students, free oral cancer screenings for local plant employees (Westlake, Covestro, and *Certainfeed*), and dental screenings at many other local health fairs. You've probably also seen Dr. Lockhart and dental staff giving away goody bags and toothbrushes to anyone with a pair of hands at events such as Autumnfest, Boo at Bruce, etc. She would never be one to tell you, but she has also used her business to donate dental supplies to those in need at local preschools, elementary schools, and the homeless.

When COVID-19 hit, many folks in our area lost their dental insurance along with their job. Dr. Lockhart swiftly began accepting Medicaid plans in order to maintain dental visits for a lot of new and existing patients. Finding Medicaid dentists in this area is still extremely difficult, and New Martinsville Dental has continued accepting Medicaid to fill this need while the local economy recovers. During this difficult time, Dr. Lockhart was also elected to the Board of Directors for the Wetzel County Chamber of Commerce, where she is helping with local business recovery efforts.

Over the past three years, Dr. Lockhart has developed into a businesswoman truly deserving of the title "Business Professional of the Year"- her story is an inspiration to the young, passionate entrepreneurs in our community!

Brooke LeMasters – *Bombshell Hair Studio*

Business Professional of the Year

Brooke LeMasters is owner/stylist at Bombshell Hair Studio, by Brooke LeMasters, in Sistersville, WV, and just celebrated the studio's sixth year anniversary. Bombshell Hair Studio by Brooke LeMasters is known for quality services and client experience. Her client's health and safety are of the utmost importance to Brooke and her team, which is why her business continues to boom...even during a pandemic. Brooke believe in giving back by supporting the schools, community and veterans with donations, annual food drive and free haircuts on Veteran's Day for those who served.

Brooke has been fortunate to meet and learn from some of the giants in the industry and she and her team have continued to keep up with the latest trends and techniques. Brooke also become a *Sunlights Balayage* Artisan Educator and has enjoyed teaching other salon owners/stylists at the hair show, online, and in their own salons or at her studio. Please consider this very deserving person as your 2021 Business Professional of the year.

Marcy Riley – *The Cellar Door*

Business Professional of the Year

I would like to nominate Marcy Riley of the Cellar Door. Marcy is an innovative, hardworking business person. In addition to offering interesting stock at reasonable prices, she also supports local artisans and crafters by selling their works. Marcy is also very generous in her support of local non-profits and is always willing to host events that might benefit the community.

Rose and Denny Wichterman – *Riesbeck's*

Business Professional of the Year

I'd like to nominate Rose and Denny Wichterman. I am nominating them together because they work together. It's hard working people like this couple who make this country work. They come to work at the local grocery store no matter what- even during a pandemic.

Sheena Stalder – *Stalder Family Creamery*

Business Professional of the Year

Kindness. Dedication. Compassion. These are the words that come to mind when I think of Sheena Stalder. The Stalder family opened the Stalder Family Creamery in downtown New Martinsville in June 2019. Sheena has been a major asset to the business since day one. Aside from assisting with the finances, booking the event space and catering the events, and making delicious ice cream flavors, Sheena has been passionate about helping our community. Sheena is a vital member of the Wetzel Tyler Chamber of Commerce. She serves on the board of directors and the events committee. Two events that Sheena holds close to her heart are the First Responder Appreciation event and Christmas Activities Day. Last September, Sheena along with other Creamery team members prepared and delivered meals to area first responders to show their appreciation and honor the memory of those who served on 9/11. Sheena was a key component to Christmas Activities Day 2020. She was a major part of shopping for over 200 children to fulfill their Christmas wishes. After the shopping, she organized and helped wrap all the gifts, allowing the volunteers to use the Creamery event space during the entire process. Sheena also organized the Christmas Activities Day events and delivery of the gifts to all the children.

In her free time, Sheena is a Girl Scout leader, Bible class teacher, 4H advisor, tutors children with dyslexia, and serves on the OSU Extension Advisory committee. Sheena also serves as a board member on the WVU Medicine Children's Ohio Valley gala and helped initiate the MOV gala committee. Despite all of these endeavors, the most important role Sheena serves is being an amazing wife, mother, and foster parent. She is the very proud mother to her daughters and has so much love to give that she embraced the role of foster mom without hesitation.

Sheena is a bright light in a world filled with darkness. She strives to hold the family business to the highest standards and is the first to lend a hand when the need arises. Our community is blessed to have a business professional like Sheena and we should all strive to follow in her footsteps. Thank you, Sheena, for all you do for this community.

Regina Lemley

Citizen of the Year

For as long as I can remember, Regina has been the most giving person in our community. She is always the first to volunteer her time and talents when needed. Every program and event she dedicates her time to is always one of the best. She is highly involved in the Short Line Lions Club and makes sure various events throughout the year go on without a hitch. She is also a bus driver for Wetzel County Schools. This year she has also taken every opportunity possible to make the kids on her route smile during her deliveries of food and school materials. Finally, this year, Regina went above and beyond to help her brother and his family during struggles with his health by organizing several fundraisers to help them out in their time of need. She invested hours of her time securing donations, running online auctions, and even delivering the winnings.

Billie Zimmerman

Citizen of the Year

I would like to nominate Billie Zimmerman for Citizen of the Year. Billie is a caring person and always ready to lend a helping hand when needed. She is the founder of Stocking of Cheer program the provides Christmas stockings to all grade school children in the county PreK through 4th grade and the rest of the kids through 8th grade get a card and a gift certificate from different places. She also has had several fundraisers for different people who are cancer patients or may have other serious medical issues to help them out with their expenses. Billie is a member of the Red Hat Society, Wetzel County Democrat Women, American Legion Auxiliary, Moose Lodge and the Refuge Church of God. Billie is a good Christian woman who has a big heart that a lot of people don't see, but I see it all the time because we are best friends. Billie has three children, four grandchildren, three dogs, and a cat.

I really appreciate the opportunity to nominate such a caring person.

Jessica Owens

Citizen of the Year

I would like to nominate Jessica Owens for the Wetzel County Chamber's "Citizen of the Year" award. Her volunteer activities are as varied as her skills. In 2016, her family pet "Kilo" was shot and killed. She dealt with her grief by organizing a benefit for the Olive Branch Animal Rescue. She didn't stop there. Also in 2016 she showed initiative and organized "Prayers for our Police Officers". In 2020 and 2021, Jessica sold hundreds of "Back the Blue" shirts. The monies raised from these sales went to sponsor "Shop with a Cop" for underprivileged children at Christmas. This year her commitment to our community made a difference to two families who lost their homes due to a fire. In both instances, the very day of the fire, she collected cash donations and much needed necessities for these families.

This nominee has taken the initiative to do something to help her community. Jessica identified a need and started something from scratch to make things better for others. It is achievements and the efforts of this kind of scale that makes Jessica Owens deserving of this award.

She has truly inspired me to become more involved in the community, reach out to those not as privileged as ourselves, and share our talents with those around us in order to make a positive change in our community.

Tonya Shuler

Citizen of the Year

I would like to nominate Tonya Shuler of Paden City as “Citizen of the Year”. She was instrumental in getting Paden City clean water. She has dedicated her life to getting our help with the water situation. We are forever grateful for the effort she has put forth to help our town.

Genesis Youth Crisis Center

Civic Organization of the Year

Genesis Youth Crisis Center was established in WV in 1980 to address a specific and pressing community need: to provide shelter for homeless youth. Genesis is the first step to a new beginning for thousands of at-risk youth. Their mission is to provide a safe haven for children that fosters hope. Every child deserves to be nurtured and supported by a stable and loving family. There are nearly 500,000 children in foster care annually, many of whom reside in West Virginia. Genesis team members actively seek families who are willing to provide a caring and nurturing home for West Virginia Children. This organization creates a positive change in the lives of our state's children who are in need of temporary or permanent families. It is their goal to connect these children with safe, nurturing relationships that will last a lifetime. They not only provide 24-hour crisis intervention, but also have the tools and knowledge to help foster parents gain the skills necessary to make a positive change in the life of a child.

Community Resources

Civic Organization of the Year

I would like to nominate Community Resources. Lisa Gonzales is a one-woman wonder and she is the Community Resource. She works tirelessly to aid the people of Wetzel County. Community Resources coordinates and facilitates the monthly visits of the Mountaineer Food Bank. She stocks and runs the necessities pantry, does tax work for low-income residents, and provides case management to anyone in need. It is amazing how much one woman can accomplish!

Wetzel County Center for Children and Families of WV

Civic Organization of the Year

I'd like to nominate Wetzel County Center for Children and Families of WV for "Civic Organization of the Year". They provide much needed resources to families in our community through the parents as teachers program, the family resource centers both in New Martinsville and Hundred, and the family resource network.

Acts Charitable Mission

Civic Organization of the Year

Act's Charitable Mission Church opened their doors on April 7th, 2019.

They are truly a come as you are, everyone is welcome, kind of church. They love to help serve the community and see souls saved!

Since opening, the church has helped many homeless find homes as well as helped many others with different needs and circumstances.

Open Door Ministries is available every Tuesday from 11:30am-1:00pm. Food is served to those that need it, no questions asked and anyone is welcome.

A.C.M was an integral part of the chamber's Christmas Activities Day the past few years. One year they purchased a bicycle for every single child that walked through their doors as well as served them and their families breakfast. This past year, they served the entire family breakfast, once again. They also formulated a way for every child that walked through their doors that day to receive a voucher to go shopping with a church member. The church allotted each member a certain amount of funding to take that child shopping for something they wanted and/or needed for the Christmas season.

A youth day is also one of the community events that the church has integrated into our community. They spent the day by the river giving the kiddos in our area free pumpkins, face painting, games to play and family activities to get involved in.

They genuinely love their community and want to win souls.

Services are Wednesday's at 7:00pm and Sunday's at 10:30 am. Sunday School is available on Sunday as well. Bible Study is also offered on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm.

ALL are welcome...come as you are!

Thank you, Acts Charitable Mission Church for loving our Lord and showing Him to our community!

Amy Cisar

Educator of the Year

During the past ten years, Amy has dedicated herself to teaching special education students at New Martinsville School. Amy holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education- kindergarten through 8th grade and a master's degree in Special Education Multi-Categorical. Aside from providing excellent education to her students, she is also a loving wife and proud mother to four children. While her children were young, Amy was blessed to spend time at home with them while also substitute teaching throughout Wetzel County Schools. Her experience in a variety of classrooms shaped her into the teacher she is today. Amy demonstrates enthusiasm and a genuine desire to determine the best way to meet every child's unique learning needs in her classroom.

Amy's students present with a variety of needs and educational differences, but they all have one thing in common: they are quick to learn and show progress. This is a testament to her ability and determination to adjust her teaching style to meet the specific learning needs of those in her classroom. Trust and teamwork are also important to Amy. She believes the first step to learning is trust. Amy's students are able to learn and grow because she first instills trust in them. Once the students trust Amy, their confidence improves, and their eager minds want to learn new things. Amy and her aide, Becky Winters, are the perfect team. Together they create individualized routines and schedules to best meet the needs of their students.

Throughout the pandemic, Amy has gone above and beyond the call of duty. Instead of solely worrying about her family and their needs, she made sure to keep in contact with her students by calling their families to see if she could help in any way. Together, Amy and Becky created individualized learning packets and provided daily online sessions for their students. They provided friendly faces and love to children during such a scary time in their young lives. Amy didn't focus solely on her students' educational needs, but also considered the larger picture by assisting children and families with housing needs, clothing needs, and Christmas wishes.

Amy is a wonderful teacher with a contagious passion to help all students in her classroom. She exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding teacher, exuding passion, initiative, creativity, and determination while inspiring others towards excellence in education. The children in our community are lucky to have her.

Wendy Tallman

Educator of the Year

The name of the person I wish to nominate is Wendy Weber Tallman, a kindergarten teacher at New Martinsville School.

I have known Wendy since the day she was born and have followed her life and career since then. She was a first grader when I myself taught first grade at New Martinsville School. After she became a kindergarten teacher, I had the privilege of being a work colleague. Additionally, after I retired and began substituting, I taught some of her classes for her. It was a pleasure to step into her shoes, even if for only an afternoon.

Wendy is a very dedicated teacher, very organized and competent, but beyond that she cares deeply for each and every one of her students, and it shows. She makes herself available night and day if students or parents need help, encouragement, or information. I often see her car in the school parking lot late in the day or evening and on weekends. I don't think I have ever known a person with a more positive attitude about life and all the people, young and old, that we share it with!

Wendy has never sought the limelight or extra attention. She just quietly goes about her job of teaching the youngest in our community and making sure she gives them the very best preparation for their futures as she can. And we all know some of the most critical times in a child's life are those very early years.

It is my very great pleasure to nominate Mrs. Wendy Tallman as Educator of the Year.

Michelle Weekley

Educator of the Year

In a normal year, I have high expectations for my children's teachers. I also have a high amount of respect for them. Teaching is not a job for everyone. However, sometimes a child is blessed with a teacher that is exactly where they are meant to be. In a crazy year, with an inconsistent schedule and many new obstacles, my 7th grader at New Martinsville School was fortunate enough to get one of those teachers.

Michelle Weekley teaches 7th grade Geometry and Pre-Algebra. This is only her second year in this position. When she accepted this position, she had no way of knowing what our country was about to face with the pandemic. I'm sure she was stressed. I am positive she was scared. Mrs. Weekley never let that uncertainty hold her back.

From the very beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, she has made communication so easy for us parents. She is so quick to respond and most importantly, thorough and easy to understand. She has more patience than most. She has never made me feel like an inconvenience or a bother. She just takes it all in stride. She made a page for the parents of her students and updates us about anything and everything along the way, from delays, to lunch menus, and math assignments. Mrs. Weekley was the first teacher to start providing live conferences. This completely changed our remote learning experience. Finally, my son felt like he was getting in-person learning from the safety of home.

When I think of Educator of the Year, I think of someone who has gone above and beyond. I instantly think of a handful of educators I had throughout school, some of which I no longer have the opportunity to thank. I will forever be grateful for everything Mrs. Weekley has done for my child and myself. I know my son may not realize it now, but someday he will understand. In everything she does, from conferences to communication, instruction to engaging, Mrs. Weekley goes above and beyond.

Kirsten Woodburn, RDH – *New Martinsville Dental*

Employee of the Year

Kirsten Woodburn has been a blessing for New Martinsville Dental since her first day on the job. To say that she wears many hats would be an understatement. Because her name is easily mistaken, patients are often shocked to learn that “Kirsten”, “Kristen”, and “Kaitlyn” are actually one person doing the work of three people. I’ve nominated Kirsten for “Employee of the Year” because my dental practice truly wouldn’t be the same without her; our local community should honor and encourage ambitious, young professionals such as herself.

Kirsten was born and raised in Moundsville. She dreamed of being a dental hygienist from a young age, so after graduating from John Marshall High School, it was off to West Liberty University to earn her bachelor’s degree. As many of you know, the Wetzel-Tyler-Monroe area has a difficult time educating and retaining our own youth, and an even harder time attracting young professionals to our area. I’m proud to say that Kirsten has been with my office for two years, and she’s not going anywhere. She’s been an inspiration to several of her younger patients by showing them it’s possible to love your career and earn a good living in our area.

As a dental hygienist, Kirsten makes visits to the dental office a breeze- she’s kind, gentle, and extremely patient. She’s attentive to her patients’ needs, and her light touch has won over countless anxious visitors. Kirsten is also quick to help coworkers with their duties; you’ve probably spoken to her on the phone or had her smiling face greet you at the front door. She’s always by my side for community events such as providing free back-to-school exams for Tyler County Schools, passing out candy during Boo at Bruce, and screening local plant employees for oral cancer. Kirsten deserves to be “Employee of the Year” for the value she brings to our local community- my dental practice certainly wouldn’t be the same without her!

Rachel Loy – *Bombshell Hair Studio*

Employee of the Year

Rachel has worked for me for over a year now and her talent, dedication, and drive never cease to amaze me. She has become such an important part of the business in so many ways.

Rachel is extremely passionate about what she does and is dedicated to bettering herself, growing her skills, and maintaining and growing the positive reputation and culture at Bombshell Hair Studio. She genuinely loves what she does and cares about each guest who sits in her chair. She is EXACTLY what I look for in someone to represent my brand and take care of studio guests.

She is always so eager to learn and grow. She takes countless continuing education classes, from myself, online, and at various venues, to make sure she is up on all the latest techniques and that her skills are sharp. She was even willing (and happy) to take the multiple virtual classes for certifications that I suggested during our two-month shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We stayed in constant communication during that time and became an even closer team, where I think it could have easily gone the other way for many work teams.

Guest experience is top priority at Bombshell Hair Studio, and I can trust Rachel will take the steps needed to ensure that her guests have the best possible experience during their time with her. Rachel says, "If I can help boost someone's confidence and see their beauty, even for a little bit, that means more to me than money ever will."

When watching her work, it is apparent that the above statement is true. She goes above and beyond to make sure that her guests are comfortable and pampered in a safe, clean space and strives to make all her work unique to fit each guest's individuality.

Jon Stearns – *Wetzel County CVB and Riesbeck's*

Employee of the Year

Jon is a shining example of a person who looked adversity in the face and took control of his own life. A year ago, Jon was homeless. He would make frequent visits to the Wetzel County Museum to take advantage of our free daily lunches. But there was something different about Jon. He never just wanted a handout. He insisted on doing odd jobs around the museum for his meal. During the Back Home Festival in 2019, Jon stepped up to the plate and worked tirelessly all weekend long for our event without anyone asking him to do so. He went nonstop for the duration of the weekend. No matter what task needed to be done, Jon was there to do it. Not only did he do each and every task, he did them the right way, and he did them with a courteous nature and with a smile on his face. Following the festival, the Wetzel County Convention & Visitors Bureau voted unanimously to hire Jon as our handyman at the museum. At this same time, Jon was offered a place to live by one of our board members. Jon took this opportunity and made the most of it. He has continued to excel in his job and other endeavors throughout the community.

During the annual *RegattaFest* last year, Jon could be seen busting his tail for that event in the same manner he did for our festival. When Main Street was lined with flower baskets last summer, it was Jon who watered them daily. If there is an event happening in New Martinsville (whether it is being run by our organization or not) Jon is there to do everything he can to help. Jon recently took a second job at *Riesbeck's*. Now, as we are all impacted by the seriousness of the COVID-19 crisis, Jon can be seen at *Riesbeck's* doing his job and doing it the way he does every job he takes on, with a good attitude and without complaint. He has taken an incredible amount of pride in his community over the last year. It is hard for me to even remember how our organization was able to get anything done properly without Jon there giving his very best to anything that was asked of him. Jon Stearns is an absolute blessing not only for our organization, but our community as a whole. It is with pride that I nominate him for this award and am able to call him my friend.

Zach Pittman - *Shoe Sensation*

Employee of the Year

Zach has been an employee and store manager at Shoe Sensation for several years, however, his day isn't always over just because he isn't at the store. During this time, he has been actively involved in the community as a member of the chamber and their many activities, always making sure Shoe Sensation is prepared to participate in Trunk or Treat, Christmas on Main Street, the Shortline Ramp Festival, etc. But he also deserves to be recognized for going above and beyond his job requirements, many times opening his own wallet to help people in the community when the need arises.

In a year that has been full of so many changes and uncertainty, Zach has made sure to adjust our business to ensure people feel safe while shopping while also offering services for those who would rather stay in their car or even while staying at home. Anyone who knows Zach, knows that I am risking never being spoken to again by nominating him but he truly deserves being recognized for all he does.

Roger Harrison

Health Care Professional of the Year

While undoubtedly every single health care professional in our community deserves this award this year, I believe the honor should go to someone that every single one of us has probably encountered over the last thirty-two years. For thirty-two years, Roger was a fixture of Wetzel County Hospital's emergency department. I am sure so many of us have a story from an emergency room visit in which Roger was a nurse on duty and provided outstanding care. I know many times, whether it be myself, a sibling, parent, or grandparent, Roger was there to do everything possible to help make you feel better. And if he knew you, or had completed your intake through the emergency department, he would come back to your room and check on you long after you were no longer officially his patient.

His entire life he has struggled with scoliosis and its effects on his body but kept smiling and pushing through to take of us all in our most vulnerable moments. Roger's health has declined until he had to leave WCH in August 2020 but he still checks in on many of his family members and friends via Facebook when he know we have been sick or struggling.

Cindi Hunt

Health Care Professional of the Year

Cindi has given the last forty years of her life to EMS in our area. She is the squad captain in Clarington, and also works for Woodsfield and Beallsville EMS. She has been a volunteer firefighter for thirty years and is the Assistant Fire Chief in Clarington. The river does not separate her selflessness, as she works closely with EMS personnel in all our surrounding areas and helps anywhere she is needed.

Cindi is the epitome of "selfless"...she has missed more family events and holidays than they can count because she gives herself tirelessly. She NEVER says no when someone needs help, a BP check, or anything anyone else needs at ANY time of day and without hesitation. Even when she is not available for a run, she works with dispatch to make sure a squad can be pulled together to get help to those in need. She has LITERALLY given her patients the clothes off her back, more than once, because they needed it more than she did.

When she heard that my husband and I were licensing our home to open it up to foster kiddos, she contacted me (even amidst the pandemic), to volunteer herself to come and do the fire inspection so our licensing wouldn't be held up and kiddos in our area would have the option of our home for a safe place to live during such a scary time in their little lives.

She has delivered numerous babies, including one in a gas station parking lot all alone. Countless lives have been saved and touched because of her. Her skills are only matched by her bedside manner...ask anyone that knows her or has had an emergency. When they see Cindi on the scene, they instantly know that somehow things will be okay. She will give everything she has, on EVERY call, to make sure everything possible has been done to save everyone and everything. She is simply amazing and our communities are blessed to have her, know her, and love her. THANK YOU CINDI!!

Marah Utt, PT, DPT, ATC

Health Care Professional of the Year

Marah has been a physical therapist for 6.5 years but her heart has always been in service of others. She has given of herself in many arenas including skilled nursing, home health, early intervention with WV Birth to Three and has found her home in the public school system. She is the Physical Therapist for Wetzel County Schools. Her heart has always been with kids and she spends the majority of her time with special education kiddos ages 3-21.

The pandemic has been hard on all of us and instead of hunkering down and only worrying about her own family, Marah made sure to keep in contact with her students by calling the families to see if she could help in any way, giving parents exercises to help their kiddos at home and alleviate some of the concerns the parents had about the fact that their kiddos couldn't get the services they so desperately needed. She posted weekly videos on the school Facebook pages to try to keep kids active and give them some normalcy and another friendly face loving them through this scary time in their little lives. She continued to collaborate with doctor's offices and equipment providers to make sure the children had the equipment they needed and that they weren't forgotten in the mess of the pandemic.

When we got our first foster placement, Marah was one of the first people to reach out to offer clothing, shoes and toys for her and was willing to come to my home to do an assessment on her to start giving her the valuable and time-sensitive interventions she needed to help her succeed. We live in Ohio; this wasn't something expected of her or required for her job...this was just Marah wanting to help in any way she could. She takes her job seriously and is always willing to do what it takes to give others a better life. Thank you, Marah, for being a resource and a knowledgeable professional that this community can count on!

Michael Smith

Health Care Professional of the Year

On the evening of August 31, 2020 my family's world was turned upside down. Our six-year-old son Jasper was in an ATV accident on our family farm. Volunteer firefighter, Michael Smith, was first on scene. Michael's quick assessment and actions helped save Jasper's life. He knew exactly what needed done and did it without hesitation. All while talking to me, explaining what was happening, and trying to keep me calm.

Jasper's injuries were extensive. He spent twelve days in Morgantown in the PICU, the first four days on a ventilator. After coming home, he had a few months' recovery, with a setback two months after the accident that required a second surgery. Thanks to Michael's quick actions, Jasper has made a full recovery. He is happy, healthy, and sweet seven-year-old. Michael kept in contact everyday with my sister for updates. The day he came home, Michael arranged for a homecoming he would never forget. Jasper was met at our home with lights and sirens from the fire trucks and firefighters in full gear. He got a tour of the truck and equipment, and his own real firefighter's helmet. He was asked to be an honorary member of the New Martinsville Fire Department.

Michael Smith is a fourth generation volunteer firefighter. He started at the age of fifteen with the Junior Firefighters at Grandview. He started with the New Martinsville Fire Department at the age of eighteen and is now the Captain and Training Officer. He has an extensive collection of certifications, including Rescue Operations Specialist, Hazmat Specialist, and Certified Rescue Diver. He also owns and operates ITB (Instructing the Bravest). His company trains departments and their firefighters. He has devoted so much of his life to firefighting, outside of his work and family. Michael resides in New Martinsville with his wife Michelle and their nine-month old son Hudson. Michelle is halfway through her training to become an EMT. Soon she will be going on calls and assisting people in need with her husband. I am certain Hudson will follow in his father's footsteps one day and be a fifth generation firefighter.

I believe volunteer firefighters do not get the appreciation or recognition they deserve. They put their life in potential danger every time they go on a call. Michael deserves the recognition. We are beyond thankful for him and will never be able to repay him for that day. Even if he is not the winner, in my eyes, he is a hero. Our hero.

Cody Elliott- *Wetzel County Sheriff's Deputy*

Law Enforcement Professional of the Year

Deputy Cody Elliott began his law enforcement career in June of 2014 with the Paden City Police Department. After graduating from the West Virginia State Police Academy in 2015, Deputy Elliott transferred to New Martinsville Police. After nearly two years of an exceptional career with NMPD, Deputy Elliott transferred to the Wetzel County Sheriff's Office where he still works today. Deputy Elliott has excelled for the Sheriff's Office as a Field Training Officer and works extra hours to ensure the new hires have the best training that they can get. Deputy Elliott was recently assigned to the department's Special Response Team as a result of his dedication and exceptional skills in law enforcement. Deputy Elliott has proven himself in the law enforcement community as one of the skilled and professional lawmen in our surrounding area.

Matt Walker- *New Martinsville Police Department Patrolman*

Law Enforcement Professional of the Year

Patrolman Matt Walker has served with the New Martinsville Police Department for the last two years. During his time with the department, he has earned a certification in firearms training and serves as the department's range officer. Patrolman Walker is also a training officer and undertakes the training of all new officers. Patrolman Walker has become a vital aspect to the New Martinsville Police Department and its success. Patrolman Walker earned the distinct honor of being awarded the New Martinsville Police Department's Medal of Valor. Prior to joining the New Martinsville Police Department, Patrolman Walker was a member of the United States Army. Patrolman Walker served from 2004-2012 and deployed to Iraq from 2005-2007 and Afghanistan from 2010-2011.

Brian Weigle- Tyler County Sheriff

Law Enforcement Professional of the Year

Sheriff Weigle began serving as the Sheriff of Tyler County in 2017 after being elected. Sheriff Weigle was reelected to serve a second term, which began in 2021. Under the direction of Sheriff Weigle, the Tyler County Sheriff's Office has grown in all aspects. The department has grown from eight to twelve road deputies. Within the department, Sheriff Weigle has made protecting the children of the county a number one priority by assigning three deputies as School Resource Officers to cover every school in Tyler County. Sheriff Weigle also implemented courthouse security to include full time security positions and walk-through metal detectors. Sheriff Weigle has been able to ensure the department is working with the latest and best equipment available to his deputies. Among that has been a new building and offices, new cruisers for every deputy with more being ordered, and all new computer software with the capability of being used in the office or cruiser. Sheriff Weigle has also been able to provide the citizens of Tyler County with around the clock 24-hour coverage. Something that has never been done in Tyler County. Sheriff Weigle worked closely with the County Commission and was able to establish the first Tyler County Sheriff's Office Special Response Team. Under Sheriff Weigle's leadership, the department also holds a monthly drug enforcement to allow deputies to focus on drug interdiction on the roadways. In a short time, Sheriff Weigle has increased manpower, updated all equipment to the best on the market, and ensure the safety of the citizens of Tyler County, especially the children. Outside of being a great leader for the Tyler County Sheriff's Office, Brian Weigle is one of the most caring and respectful individuals you will ever meet.

Andrew Ridley - *Monroe County Sheriff's Department Deputy*

Law Enforcement Professional of the Year

Deputy Ridley serves on the Monroe County Sheriff's Department but assists many local law enforcement agencies when needed as well. He is often seen on the riverfront patrolling, assisting, and keeping our communities safe. He has been in law enforcement for eight years and has been a K9 handler since 2017. He has been an integral part in numerous arrests that have taken dangerous substances and individuals off of the streets in our communities and out of the hands of our children. Deputy Ridley serves his community at all times, even when not on shift. He spends time doing K9 demonstrations at schools and is often taking his K9 to community events to meet the community and get to know them. Despite having a young family at home, he still volunteers his time at local animal shelters and has volunteered his time in the past as a soccer and t-ball coach. Deputy Ridley is a veteran that has devoted his life to the service of others. We are lucky to have law enforcement personnel like Deputy Ridley in our communities and we thank him for his service!

Wyatt Dallison

Youth of the Year

I would like to nominate Wyatt Dallison as Youth of the Year. Wyatt is a senior at Valley High School, where he is a four-year football letterman and attends welding classes at the Wetzel County Technical Education Center. During his high school summers, Wyatt has earned his living by mowing multiple yards in the community. He earned the Landscape Management Proficiency Silver Award from West Virginia FFA. In the winter months he cuts and sells firewood to the people of the community.

When Wyatt isn't busy with school, sports, or working, he is having fun being the co-founder of the Short Line's YouTube sensation, "Outdoor Chaos." He is always looking for ways to make a fun, family-friendly video of any type of outdoor activity, mainly hunting, fishing, or trapping. With this channel, he has become a huge role-model for the boys and girls who watch. Being that type of role-model in the world we are living in is very admirable. Thank you for Considering Wyatt Dallison as Wetzel County's Youth of the Year.

Bre Herrick

Youth of the Year

Hardworking. Creative. Caring. These are words that describe Breanna Herrick. Breanna is a junior at Magnolia High School. She is academically driven and knows the importance of her education. She is a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. Breanna also was nominated for and accepted the position of a JASON Learning student Argonaut. Student Argonauts travel around the world to work side by side with scientists and engineers. In doing so, they become the eyes and ears for their peer's back home, experiencing firsthand what it's like to pursue a STEM career, sharing that knowledge when they return to their local communities, and making critical real-world connections to the STEM topics they've learned about in the JASON classroom curricula. Due to the pandemic, the student Argonauts were unable to travel outside of the county, so instead Breanna participated in a two-week virtual seminar, soaking in as much information as possible.

Breanna is also an iBelieve Foundation representative, HOBY representative, and Sources of Strength peer leader. The iBelieve Foundation was created in 2011 to provide opportunities for Appalachian youth. The Hugh O'Brian Youth (HOBY) Leadership program empowers young people to become a positive force around the world. The mission of Sources of Strength is to prevent suicide by increasing help seeking behaviors and promoting connections between peers and caring adults. Aside from being an excellent student, Breanna is also an athlete at Magnolia High School. She plays an active role on the cheerleading squad and the track and field team.

Breanna wears many hats. She is a star student, volunteer, athlete, pageant queen, and business owner. With the help of her mom, Breanna has grown a very successful local business known as *Bre's Cupcakin' Around*. She creates delicious cakes and cupcakes. Breanna uses her talents of baking not only to make money for herself, but also to raise and donate money to local causes. Since opening her business, Breanna has used her baking talents to help raise upwards of \$5000 for local charities and organizations. Wetzel County is blessed to have Breanna Herrick. Thank you, Breanna, for everything you do for your school and community.