

# *Alabama* Retailer

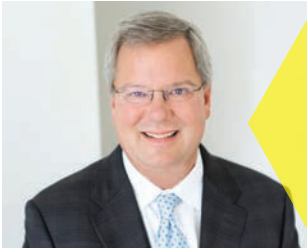
*MUST DOS  
IN MARCH  
Participate  
in Primaries  
and Complete  
2020 Census*

*RETRO RETURN  
ARC Returns  
\$7M to  
Members*

*2020-2021  
CHAIRMAN  
TODD NODEN  
President of  
Books-A-  
Million Inc.*

**FAMILY PHARMACY**  
*Mike Vinson*  
**PRESIDENT OF ADAMS DRUGS**

# From the President



## Legislative Goals: Keep Businesses Open and Economy Strong

Alabama entered the new decade on a high note. More Alabamians are working than ever before, and revenue coming into the state last year broke records. We won't know for certain until early this month, but by all accounts, holiday sales in Alabama exceeded everyone's expectations.

It is under that blue-sky economy that the Alabama Legislature begins its regular session Feb. 4. Increases are expected in both the General Fund and education budgets in 2021, the fiscal year for which the Legislature will be writing spending plans.

For Alabama, the dark cloud on its political horizon is a prison crisis that includes overcrowding, a shortage of correctional officers and the threat of a federal government takeover.

Leading up to the session, I talked with the Association of County Commissions of Alabama about license reform. I left those conversations optimistic that we may be able to find common ground to simplify and consolidate the licensing process in our state.

Everyone wants Alabama's business climate to continue to improve and our economy to thrive.

The Alabama Retail Association will be at the Legislature throughout the session that must end by May 18. Our goal is to protect retailers and support measures that ease operations for business in our state. Follow our Retail Report email each Friday and provide feedback on the issues that concern you.

Rick Brown, Publisher and President

# Alabama Retailer

February 2020 Issue 1 Vol 20

**Publisher**

Rick Brown

**Editor**

Nancy King Dennis

**Design**

Copperwing Design

**Cover Photo**

Brandon Robbins

**ALABAMA RETAIL  
ASSOCIATION**

*2020-2021 Officers*

**Chairman**

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Books-A-Million, Birmingham-based

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**JODIE STANFIELD**

Local Joe's, Rainbow City,  
Southside and Albertville

**President**

**RICK BROWN**

Montgomery

**Vice President**

**ALISON SCOTT**

WINGATE HOSP  
Montgomery

**Treasurer**

**BOB AKERS**

Davis Direct, Montgomery

**Executive Committee Designee**

**MICHAEL GEE**

Pants Store, Leeds-based

**Immediate Past Chairman**

**JACOB SHEVIN**

Standard Furniture,  
Alabama and Tennessee

**ALABAMA RETAIL  
COMP**

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**JIMMY RAY SMITH**

Jimmy Smith Jewelers, Decatur

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**GEORGE WILDER**

The Locker Room,  
Montgomery and Auburn

**Fund Administrator**

**RICK BROWN**

Montgomery

**Fund Manager**

**MARK YOUNG**

Montgomery

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## Alabama Retailer of the Year and Centennial Retailer nominations due May 11

The Alabama Retail Association will accept nominations for the 2020 Alabama Retailer of the Year and the Alabama Centennial Retailer awards through Monday, May 11.



In its 21st year, the Alabama Retailer of the Year awards recognize outstanding retailers who have demonstrated a blend of sound business practices and innovation with commitment to their communities, customers and employees.


Nominees must own, operate or manage a retail business with a physical presence in Alabama and that Alabama

location must have been in operation for a minimum of five years. To be considered a retail operation, a business must collect state and local sales taxes.

 **Nominate your favorite retailer at [alabamaretail.org/retaileroftheyearnomination/](http://alabamaretail.org/retaileroftheyearnomination/)**

Retail businesses that began in 1920 or before are eligible to be recognized as Alabama Centennial Retailers. Retailers nominated will be contacted and asked to provide a brief history and other information about their business.



 **Help us recognize a retailer that has been in business for 100 years or more by filling out the form at [alabamaretail.org/centennialretailernomination/](http://alabamaretail.org/centennialretailernomination/)**



“We operate in an omnichannel world where the customer purchases products in a variety of ways that include physical stores, online and a combination of both.”

- TODD

AN INTERVIEW WITH

# Todd Noden

## Alabama Retail Chairman & President of Books-A-Million Inc.

By Nancy King Dennis

Photo By Brandon Robbins

## ASSOCIATION ALLOWS RETAILERS TO HAVE COLLECTIVE VOICE, CHAIRMAN SAYS

“My first job in retail, other than stocking shelves in high school, was with Sears, Roebuck and Co. in Chicago,” said Todd Noden, Alabama Retail Association's 2020-2021 board chairman.

That planning and budget position with one of America's oldest retailers taught him key aspects of the retail economic model, he said. His career next shifted into management consulting with a focus on strategy development for large corporations in several different industries, including retail.

After moving back into company management, Todd served as chief financial officer and chief operating officer at a Georgia carpet manufacturing company and as vice president of accounting and financial analysis for a Southeast convenience store and gasoline retail chain.

In April 2012, he became chief financial officer for Birmingham-based Books-A-Million Inc. Through the years, his job title grew to include executive vice president and chief operating officer. In December 2019, he was promoted to president.

His diverse responsibilities at Books-A-Million include finance, information technology, warehousing, distribution, store operations, human resources, construction, maintenance and legal. “Every day is truly different,” he said.

The Midwest native attended Purdue University on a Naval ROTC scholarship, graduating with a bachelor's degree in industrial management in 1985. After serving four years as a Navy officer, he received his Master of Business Administration from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business in 1991.

“Because of the complexity of the business, heavy analysis of data and the need for strong business systems,” working in the retail industry “fit my background,” Todd said.

### Collective Voice and Peer Resource

Todd began serving on the Alabama Retail Association board in 2013 and joined the executive committee in 2016. His two-year term as chairman began Jan. 1.

He said his goal as chairman is threefold:

- Foster grassroots involvement in legislative issues;
- Help members become aware of the resources available through the association; and
- Help members leverage their membership to network.

The Alabama Retail Association “provides a collective voice on the issues facing retailers today,” said its chairman. “Alabama Retail Association monitors legislative activity, makes members aware of pending

legislation and solicits feedback from members on legislation so that their voice is heard. This would be impossible for individual retailers to do on their own.”

Even competitors need to discuss their common issues and work together for the common good, he said.

“The association is a resource for sharing information and connecting retailers to network and discuss approaches to dealing with problems they face,” Todd said. “Retailers are competitive by nature, but it makes sense to gain input on issues you may be facing from your peers.” ■

**Birmingham-based Books-A-Million is the nation's second largest bookseller. The company operates more than 260 stores in 31 states, employing more than 5,000. A thousand of those employees work in Alabama. BAM, founded in 1917 in Florence, has been an Alabama Retail member since 1984.**

MEMBER  
SINCE  
1984

### ALABAMA RETAIL'S OTHER 2020 OFFICERS



Vice Chairman  
**Jodie Stanfield**  
Local Joe's



Treasurer  
**Bob Akers**  
Davis Direct



Executive Committee Designee  
**Michael Gee**  
The Pants Store



Immediate Past Chairman  
**Jacob Shevin**  
Standard Furniture Co.

*Find a full list of ARA directors at [alabamaretail.org/association/directors](http://alabamaretail.org/association/directors)*



FILLING A NICHE

# Kitchen Specialty Store Offers Functional Pottery and More for the Well-Appointed Kitchen

IN APRIL, WESLEY LASSEN CELEBRATES 21 YEARS  
AS OWNER OF THE COOK STORE, A SHOPPING DESTINATION  
IN MOUNTAIN BROOK VILLAGE FOR 45 YEARS

Story by Nancy King Dennis. Photos by Brandon Robbins



*Wesley Lassen poses in her Mountain Brook store with her apricot-colored Goldendoodle, Lucy, who greets customers from her chair just inside the front door. Lucy "loves to pose for pictures, and she loves to sell things on Instagram," said Wesley.*

In 1999, Bette Powell was on the tennis court when she learned the current owner wanted to close The Cook Store in Mountain Brook. She immediately thought of her daughter.

At the time, Bette's daughter, Wesley Powell Lassen, was working at the Birmingham-based department store, Parisian.

"How could you possibly want to close an iconic building and a great business like this?," Wesley recently asked as she scanned the wooden floors, walls and beams of the almost 45-year-old store situated on the bend of Cahaba Road as it enters Mountain Brook Village.

Sam Franks opened The Kitchen Shop in 1975. In 1986, Betty Knight bought the kitchen specialty store and changed the name to The Cook Store.

"I asked her if she would sell it to me, and she sold it to me," said Wesley. "I did cry for two weeks, because I went from making a salary to making nothing."

In April, Wesley will celebrate 21 years as the store's owner. "Every year of my ownership has been profitable," Wesley, who majored in economics in college, adds proudly.

The Cook Store sells gadgets, pots and pans, knives, functional pottery, glasses, barware and other items for a well-appointed kitchen, but nothing that requires electricity to run it.

"We sell four different kinds of coffee pots – an espresso maker, a Toddy cold water press, a Chemex and a French press. Four coffee makers, no plugs. No blenders. No Cuisinarts," she said. "But we have a chopper that we sold over 2,000 of after a great advertisement, so that makes us very much of a niche store."

### Customer Comes First

"Our customers are the most important part of each day from the moment the front door is unlocked," said Wesley, who along with her apricot-colored Goldendoodle, Lucy, greets many of those customers.

Putting the customer first sometimes means sending them to another retailer or helping them realize that they already have the right gadget for the job at hand.

"Whereas we want to sell things, we also want the customer to have what they need. And if they don't need something today, they'll need something tomorrow," said Wesley. "We know our customers so well that their satisfaction honestly does come first."

### Engaging the Engaged

Catering to the customer has helped The Cook Store grow another niche – bridal registries.

"We bow down to our brides and grooms," said Wesley. Each couple receives personal attention with selections added to an old-fashioned registry. "We invite brides and often the grooms-to-be to explore our store, ask questions, seek guidance and put together the place settings of their dreams. There is no right or wrong way to mix and match pottery or cookware."

Once registered, a card is created that includes an exact description

of the gift, the price and, once bought, the date purchased and the name of purchaser. A giant chalkboard behind the register also features the names of The Cook Store brides and grooms and their wedding dates. "This allows people easily to see who is registered and often leads to an unexpected sale," said Wesley.

Capping off the personal service, "as the majority of our bridal sales are for local weddings, we are happy to deliver directly to each bride's front door," she added.

### Team Work

"Behind every successful woman is a tribe of amazing people who have her back," contends Wesley, whose tribe includes nine team members other than herself. Her mom is counted among those as she still helps at the store, although not as frequently as she did when Wesley followed up on her suggestion and bought the store 21 years ago.

"We have a faithful group; everyone works as if the store were their own," said Wesley, who recruits team members with ties to the community.

Suzan Doidge, executive director of the Mountain Brook Chamber of Commerce, agrees The Cook Store has a great team: "Wesley and her entire team boast the biggest smiles, friendliest personalities and most down-to-earth spirits of anywhere around town." ■



A giant blackboard listing all of the brides and grooms registered at The Cook Store is right inside the front door, behind the cash register. The kitchen specialty shop at 2841 Cahaba Road in Mountain Brook is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. Visit [thecookstoremtbrook.com](http://thecookstoremtbrook.com)

# Welcome

## New Members



### FEATURED NEW MEMBER

**BRIDAL  
BLISS LLC  
HOMEWOOD**

**Founded 1979**

OWNER

**Regina Theo  
(pictured)**

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

**4**

LOCATION

**2900 Linden Ave.,  
Homewood, AL  
35209**

MEMBER SINCE

**Oct. 21, 2019**

A&R Design LLC  
**GULF SHORES**

AA Preemployment  
Center Inc.  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Accident Spine  
& Rehab Inc.  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Adventure Sports Inc.  
**AUBURN**

AJ Bravo LLC  
**PIEDMONT**

Alfredo's  
Green Spring LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

American  
Home Store LLC  
**TRINITY**

APW Properties Inc.  
**MOBILE**

Babs Coffee LLC  
**HOMEWOOD**

Bigfoot's Little Donuts LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Birm Premiere  
Cinema LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

BMH DDS LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

BTParent LLC  
**MOBILE**

BTTL LLC  
**CROPWELL**

Cakeitecture LLC  
**OPELIKA**

Cam's Cottons LLC  
**ENTERPRISE**

Carrigan's MTB LLC  
**MOUNTAIN BROOK**

Casa Fiesta  
Fultondale Inc.  
**FULTONDALE**

Casa Fiesta Grill  
Inverness Inc.  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Casa Fiesta Grill Inc.  
**TRUSSVILLE**

Casa Fiesta Inc.  
**CULLMAN**

CD Covenant Distributors  
International LLC  
**ANNISTON**

Cedar Street  
Social Club LLC  
**MOBILE**

Chandler's Ford  
Brewing LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Coffee Monster LLC  
**MOBILE**

Continental Novelty &  
Floral Supply Inc.  
**VESTAVIA**

Crawford Insurance LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Dauphin  
Management Inc.  
**MOBILE**

EL Mariachi  
Mexican Grill LLC  
**DALEVILLE**

Euvista LLC  
**CULLMAN**

Foundations Pediatric  
Therapy LLC  
**DOTHAN**

Garrett's Cafe Inc.  
**ALBERTVILLE**

Guncles LLC  
**MOBILE**

Gustavo Cortes LLC  
**ALEXANDER CITY**

Gut 2nd Ave LLC  
**OPELIKA**



Hackleburg Market LLC  
**HACKLEBURG**

Hambones BBQ LLC  
**WINFIELD**

Harold's Home LLC  
**ANDALUSIA**

Harry Mc LLC  
**COTTONDALE**

Healthy Me LLC  
**PRATTVILLE**

Higher Education  
Partnership  
**MONTGOMERY**

Jin Jin Restaurant Inc.  
**ENTERPRISE**

Kinematic Sports LLC  
**TUSCALOOSA**

LAD 5 FOODS Inc.  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Lake Guntersville Ace  
Hardware LLC  
**GUNTERSVILLE**

LX LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Magic City Coffee  
Roasters LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Magnolia  
Dental Holdings I LLC  
**VESTAVIA HILLS**

Mary Kay Inc.  
**ADDISON, TX**

McCranie  
and Associates LLC  
**MOBILE**

Mike Barnett  
**MONTGOMERY**

New Century Tires and  
Auto Repairs Inc.  
**MOBILE**

NHAM Southside LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Old Majestic  
Brewing Co. LLC  
**MOBILE**

Paul's Automotive Inc.  
**MOBILE**

Phi Eta Sigma National  
Honor Society Inc.  
**TUSCALOOSA**

Queen City Market LLC  
**SELMA**

Rab's Furniture Inc.  
**ARDMORE**

Rolf's Inc.  
**NORTHPORT**

Safety First Services Inc.  
**SCOTTSBORO**

Sai I 65 LLC  
**MONTGOMERY**

Saranaz LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Shree Omkar  
Delaware LLC  
**GULF SHORES**

South Huntsville Business  
Association  
**HUNTSVILLE**

Southern Ale Works LLC  
**HUNTSVILLE**

State Line Tire Shop LLC  
**ATMORE**

Sugar Sands 2019 LLC  
**GULF SHORES**

TABS19 LLC  
**MOBILE**

The Happy Pappy LLC  
**GULF SHORES**

TherapySouth -  
SoHo LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Three Cracked Eggs LLC  
**MOBILE**

TJS Hotwings of  
Albertville Inc.  
**ALBERTVILLE**

UC Tuscaloosa Truck LLC  
**BIRMINGHAM**

Vinny's Mangos LLC  
**MADISON**

We Care  
Family Medicine LLC  
**PRATTVILLE**

West Side Auto Care LLC  
**DOTHAN**

William K Elmore  
**MOUNTAIN BROOK**



**Founded 1990**

OWNERS

**Zack (pictured)  
and Norman Azar**

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

**20**

LOCATION

**2461 Main St.,  
Millbrook, AL  
36054**

MEMBER SINCE

**Sept. 25, 2019**

FEATURED NEW MEMBER

**SMOKEHOUSE PIT  
BBQ LLC  
MILLBROOK**

# Family Pharmacy

By Nancy King Dennis

AN INTERVIEW WITH

## Mike Vinson, President of Adams Drugs

Photo By Brandon Robbins

*Mike Vinson relaxes in  
the pharmacy gift shop  
named for his mother*

“We serve our customers in such a way that we will have the opportunity to do it again,” said Mike Vinson, president of Adams Drugs, a 12-store family owned regional pharmacy serving 60,000 patients in the River Region.

“My parents cultivated us and taught us how to take care of our customers,” he explained.

Tom and Emily Vinson opened their first pharmacy 58 years ago on Adams Avenue in downtown Montgomery. The Vinson family still operates a store at that location. “My father opened his second store in 1978 behind Baptist Hospital, and we’ve grown the business since then to 12 locations,” said Mike, who along with his wife, Lee, owns the family business. “I thank her for not throwing me out of the house the times I came home and said, ‘I want to open another store.’”

Adams Drugs has eight locations in Montgomery and one each in Prattville, Millbrook, Wetumpka and Pine Level.

### Family Serving Families

The Vinson family lives its company motto, “Our family serving your family since 1962.”

Tom Vinson died shortly after opening the second pharmacy, leaving his wife and sons, Mike and Blake, to run the business. While Blake Vinson is now retired, Blake’s son, Bo Vinson, is a technician at the Vaughn Road store in Montgomery. Mike and Lee Vinson’s children, Blakey and Scott Vinson, have administrative responsibilities with the pharmacies.

Mike Vinson is president of Adams Drugs, a family business that operates 12 pharmacies in the River Region.

“It means a lot when you walk in our store, and before you even get to the counter, they’ve got your package, your prescription waiting for you.” - MIKE

The third generation has “pretty much done everything – deliver, clean commodes. The same things I did when I was growing up,” said Mike. “I was helping to stock shelves” at age 8, he said. “I eventually became a clerk, then a delivery man and then a technician.”

### Give Them A Reason to Come Back

Customer service sets Adams Drugs apart from other pharmacies, Mike contends.

“Good customer service is giving the customer what they want and giving it to them when you said you were going to give it to them; and it really helps when you have a smile on your face when you’re doing it,” he said. He asks his more than 150 team members to show compassion to Adams Drugs’ customers who are often dealing with illness and other life stresses.

*Continued on page 12*

## THE ESSENTIALS

**Founded**  
November 1962

**Number of Employees**  
156

**Mentor**  
My father, Tom Vinson

**Smart Move**  
Taking advantage of opportunities to locate stores where there was a “heavy” chain presence but no independent pharmacies

**Learning Moment**  
When I came to the realization that the customer pays all the bills and that I needed to give them a reason to come back. My father told me “the customer is not always right, but they are always the customer.”

**Wisdom Shared**  
I tell our employees to be a “giver” rather than a “taker.” Give of your time compassionately to the customer across the counter, because you are probably not aware of what they are dealing with in their life. This world is made up of givers and takers, so choose to be a giver. My favorite quote is: “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

See more  
of this story at  
[alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)





"They treat our elderly customers like they were their grandparents," he said. "We're all about relationships."

Ninety-five percent of Adams Drugs' revenue comes from its pharmacies. While all of the stores also sell gifts, three have named gift shops, which attracts customers, especially to the new stores, said Mike.

"Adams Drugs competes with national chains and somehow makes it work," said the 2019 Alabama Retailer of the Year judges, who chose Mike and Lee Vinson as the 2019 Gold Retailers of the Year in the Annual Sales More Than \$20 Million category.

"Once the customers get to experience the level of customer service we offer, it's not often that they return to a chain – not by choice at least," Mike explained in his Retailer of the Year entry.

### Staying Well

Adams Drugs' services don't just extend to those who are sick.

Adams' locations also offer wellness screenings and immunizations. Over the past two years, wellness screenings have grown 60% and the number of flu shots administered has increased 66%.

"Our immunization program is really taking off," said Mike. "Pharmacies give more flu shots than any other profession. We give more flu shots than doctors, because we have better access to the vaccine and the patient."

He said some pharmacists, especially newer ones, "don't want to be counting pills or jumping through hoops to adjudicate claims with insurance companies. They want to help the patient" and Adams' wellness programs give them that opportunity.

Hepatitis A exposure at a Montgomery restaurant in February 2019 added that vaccine to the stores' protocol. "We vaccinated almost 2,700 people in about two months," Mike said.

In August, the Alabama Department of Public Health recommended all food service workers be vaccinated for Hepatitis A. "It costs a good bit to get a Hep A shot," which will keep some from getting the vaccine unless the state requires it, Mike said.



*Lee and Mike Vinson in the Emily B gift shop of their Montgomery store on Perry Hill Road. The gift shop is named for Mike's mother, Emily Blakey Vinson. Adams' other two named gift shops are Periwinkle on Vaughn Road and Emily's Closet on Copperfield Drive. Photo by Amy Carson Dennis*

Adams Drugs has also developed a private label and distributes free vitamins under that label to children between the ages of 3 and 12.

### Good Neighbors

Besides the health of its customers, Adams Drugs also cares about the well-being of the communities it serves.

"The Vinson family, through Adam Drugs, gives back," said Willie Durham,

chairman of the Montgomery Area Chamber of Commerce. "They are good neighbors."

He points to Adams Drugs' commitment to delivering Meals on Wheels to area shut-ins and sponsoring more than 15 youth sports or cheerleading teams in the River Region.

"They are making a difference, as well as making a living," the chamber exec said.

Sponsoring youth sports is "the best advertising money, we have ever spent," said Mike, adding that the family business sponsored its first baseball team the first year it opened. "It is a great investment, because you're invested in these kids." Plus, it generates "goodwill with their parents and their grandparents," he added.

Among Adams Drugs' many other sponsorships are the March of Dimes Breakfast for Babies program and Hope Inspired Ministries, which offers job and life skill training for chronically unemployed, poorly educated and low-skilled adults.

Adams Drugs considers customer service and community involvement as company cornerstones.

"You can rest assured that the excellent customer service, friendly employees and community commitment has not changed since 1962," said Mike. ■

# Member News

## BROMBERG'S CELEBRATES 60 YEARS IN MOUNTAIN BROOK



MEMBER  
SINCE  
1992

**Bromberg's** celebrated the 60th anniversary of its Mountain Brook store Nov. 20 with a ribbon cutting. While Bromberg's was founded in 1836 in Mobile, in 1959, it became the first downtown Birmingham retailer to open a branch location over the mountain. The Cahaba Road site was the last undeveloped parcel of land on the circle in Mountain Brook Village, and before being built, required approval of Mountain Brook founding father, Robert Jemison Jr. Pictured at the 60th anniversary ribbon-cutting from left are Wil, Nancy and Ricky Bromberg, current Bromberg's president and the great-great-great grandson of the company's founder, along with Mountain Brook Mayor Stewart Welch. *Visit [brombergs.com](http://brombergs.com)*

## NEW WRAPSODY IN HOOVER; TRUSSVILLE STORE BY SUMMER



MEMBER  
SINCE  
2005

**Wrapsody** moved Oct. 2 to a new Hoover location at 1028 Marble Terrace in the Stadium Trace Village. By early summer, owners Christie and Reel Howell plan to open a third location of the gift boutique in a new development in Trussville off U.S. 11. The business founded by Sarah G. Brown and Terry Wakefield Shea opened in Hoover in August 2004. In 2009, they opened their second store in Auburn. The Howells have owned the stores since 2018. Besides gifts, Wrapsody carries home accessories, seasonal décor, clothing, handbags, jewelry and more. *Visit [wrapsodyonline.com](http://wrapsodyonline.com)*

## GROCER JIMMY WRIGHT JOINS ALABAMA RETAIL DIRECTORS



MEMBER  
SINCE  
2006

**Wright's Market** president Jimmy Wright joined the Alabama Retail Association board of directors Jan. 1 for a two-year term. He began his career at age 12 in 1973 as a bagger at the Opelika store his father managed and that Jimmy eventually would own. His 22,000-square-foot independent grocery, known for its fresh meat and produce, employs 32. Wright, an innovator in mobile and online grocery shopping, earned his bachelor's degree in business administration from Auburn University at Montgomery. *Visit [wrightsmarkets.com](http://wrightsmarkets.com)*



## IN MEMORIAM, JAMES "JIMMY" BILL KOIKOS, 1938-2019

**The Bright Star's** Jimmy Koikos died Nov. 16, 2019, seven months after being diagnosed with bone cancer. He was 81. "He's been the heart and soul of this restaurant for 60 years," said Nicky Koikos, who worked side-by-side with his brother as owner-operator of the Bessemer restaurant, which in 2010 received an America's Classics designation from the James Beard Foundation. Their father Bill and uncle Pete Koikos immigrated from Greece in 1923 and two years later purchased an ownership interest in the restaurant founded in 1907 by their cousin Tom Bonduris. Alabama Retail honored The Bright Star as a Centennial Retailer in 2007. Memorials may be directed to: The 1831 Scholarship Fund at the University of Alabama, P.O. Box 870101, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0101. *Visit [thebrightstar.com](http://thebrightstar.com)*

MEMBER  
SINCE  
2012



POWERSPORTS ENTHUSIASTS

# Florence Brothers Follow Their Dad into the Motorcycle/ Powersports Business

LONGSHORE CYCLE CENTER WILL BE 45 YEARS OLD IN MARCH  
WITH BRIAN AND TOM LONGSHORE AT THE WHEEL SINCE 2008

Story and photos by Nancy King Dennis



*"We have a little bit for everybody and every budget," said Tom Longshore, right, who with his older brother, Brian, owns Longshore Cycle Center, a business their father founded in 1975.*



Jim Longshore raced motocross in the '60s and '70s before beginning to sell Triumphs and Kawasakis as a sales rep for those brands.

In March of 1975, he purchased an existing Honda motorcycle dealership in Florence and became his own boss.

With his enthusiasm for the business, it grew quickly and two years later, he moved Longshore Cycle Center to a bigger footprint at 913 Mitchell Blvd. Over the years, Jim added Suzuki, Yamaha, Kawasaki and Sea-Doo brands to the mix.

When his two sons Brian and Tom were 14, they started chipping in at the family business.

"Every day I was out of school or even if I just had a half day my senior year, I was down here working, because it was the most fun thing to do," said Brian. The brothers both worked their way through college, earning business management degrees from the University of North Alabama.

By 2008, the brothers were in charge.

Brian handles sales and Tom watches over parts and services, but "we just do whatever needs to be done," said Tom, adding that is the reality of running a small business.

When asked what advice their dad gave them, Brian said, "He told me you are on straight commission," and Tom chimed in, "You're in control of your own destiny, so you can make however much you can."

The sales staff at Longshore Cycle continues to be compensated on a commission basis and all the business' 21 employees' pay is "tied one way or another with performance," said Tom.

### More Than Motorcycles

Both inside and outside the center, there are motorcycles as far as the eye can see, so the inventory makes the earning potential good. Longshore Cycle also sells scooters, dirt bikes, ATVs, side-by-sides and personal watercraft.

The business draws customers from the entire Shoals area as well as nearby Tennessee and Mississippi. "Some people are looking for a specific bike," while others just recognize the diversity of products the business offers, said Tom. "Five brands under one roof and a ton of preowned. We have a really wide variety, and it is always changing."

The business recently added a 12,000-square-foot warehouse to accommodate its growing side-by-side inventory. Also known as utility vehicles, side-by-sides are off-road vehicles that seat two people next to each other, much like a car or truck. Some even seat four.

"You can put your whole family in one machine, so you don't have four machines spread out with your kids and your wife," said Brian.

Tom said the added space for side-by-sides may allow the dealership to expand even more.

While its inventory draws buyers in, the brothers said their reputation closes the sale.

"This area is so relationship-based," said Tom. "Taking care of people is the best strategy to expand."

While customers find the business via its website, Facebook page and advertisements, many customers

say they shop with Longshore Cycle, because "you've got a good reputation. You take care of people," said Tom.

Bike clubs and other riding groups also end up being ambassadors for the business.

Those riding enthusiasts help the Longshores raise money for the brothers' favorite charities too.

Each May, the business sponsors Cruisin' for St. Jude with 100 percent of the proceeds going to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

In August of every year, Longshore Cycle Center sponsors the North Alabama Christian Children's Home Benefit Motorcycle Ride, which in 2019 raised \$9,762 for the residential group home for abused, abandoned or neglected children.

Different clubs will turn out for the two events "and get their friends to ride with them and have fun raising money," said Brian.

### Next generation?

It is yet to be determined if a third generation of Longshores will be running the family business. Both brothers have children, but the oldest hasn't yet reached the magic age of 14. "You never know," said Tom.

For now, "we just strive to be a better business than we were yesterday," said Brian. ■



*Sales of side-by-sides like those in front of Longshore Cycle Center in Florence have been steadily growing, say the brothers who operate the family business, which is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. Visit [longshorecycles.com](http://longshorecycles.com).*

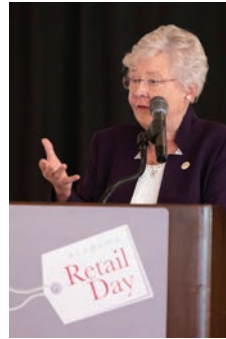
# Make Sure You and Those You Know are Counted in 2020 U.S. Census

Starting in mid-March, every Alabamian needs to be counted.

From March 12-24, about three of every four households will receive an invitation via the U.S. mail from the U.S. Census Bureau to respond to the 2020 census online or by phone. Most of the remaining will receive a paper questionnaire along with an invitation to respond online. Five percent will receive their questionnaire when a census taker drops it off at their home and less than one percent will be counted in person instead of invited to respond on their own.

"I urge everybody to complete the census form and to make sure everybody around you and those who work for or with you, does the same thing," Gov. Kay Ivey said to the those in attendance at Alabama Retail Day. The governor wants at

**'It is imperative that everyone fills out and returns the form.'**  
- GOV. KAY IVEY



least an 80 percent response rate in Alabama. In the 2010 Census, Alabama had a 72 percent response rate.

All households that have not yet responded will receive a paper questionnaire by mid-April.

Retailers, restaurants and other businesses use census data to determine where to locate, relocate or expand their stores. The data also determines how many seats Alabama has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Encourage employees, customers and residents in our communities to fill out their census forms.

You count. Alabama counts.

 [Learn more at www.census.alabama.gov](http://www.census.alabama.gov)

## Make the Retail Vote Count March 3

On Tuesday, March 3, Alabamians will go to the polls to begin to select their next president. Also on the ballot will be races for U.S. senator, all seven of Alabama's seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and six state appellate court positions.

Your Alabama Retail Association will share its endorsements and its Voter Guide with you electronically in the weeks leading up to the primaries.



For the primaries:


- Encourage employees to register to vote
- Encourage those who can't go the polls to vote absentee
- Give your employees time off to vote
- Ask your employees, friends and family to support candidates who are right for retail

When speaking with employees be careful to explain that no adverse action will be taken against any employee based on his/her political views.

 [To learn more, visit alabamaretail.org/advocacy/elections/](http://alabamaretail.org/advocacy/elections/)

## Frequent Fliers: Get Your STAR ID Now

Beginning Oct. 1 of this year, you must have a secure driver license known in Alabama as a STAR ID for domestic air travel or to visit certain federal facilities. The Secure, Trusted and Reliable Identification complies with the federal REAL ID Act of 2005. STAR ID was first introduced in the fall of 2011. If you are a frequent flier and don't yet have a STAR ID, schedule an appointment soon at one of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Driver License Examining Offices. Specific documents are required to receive a STAR ID.

 [To schedule your appointment and review the documents needed, go to www.alea.gov](http://www.alea.gov)

# Greenville Hardware Sells What the Community Needs

Story by Nancy King Dennis. Photo by Joe Rhodes.

James H. Dunklin IV grew up in Greenville, Alabama – just like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather, all also named James H. Dunklin.

That kind of intertwining of a family and a place has a powerful pull.

So in 1993, Jim Dunklin bought back the hardware store his great-grandfather J.H. Dunklin II founded in 1891.

Like many small-town hardware and general stores, the motto at J.H. Dunklin & Co. Inc. is “if we don’t have it, you don’t need it.”

Since the beginning, selling what the community and its customers need has been a reality for Greenville Hardware, the company’s doing-business-as name.

A 1931 advertorial in the local newspaper described the business as “a bulwark of commercial activity in Greenville.”

Forty years earlier, the second J.H. Dunklin bought out the hardware department of a general mercantile business where he had been working and set up shop across the street near Greenville’s courthouse square.

Furniture was added to the mix, then the founder moved the business back across the street to the building where his hardware career started and that’s where Greenville Hardware remains – at 515 E. Commerce St.

At the time of the 1931 article, the building, which is older than the 129-year-old store it houses, had, listed in this order:

hardware, furniture, undertaking, plumbing, roofing and farm implement and supply departments.

One Dunklin brother ran the hardware portion of the business and the other ran the funeral home. When the third-generation owners died in the 1960s, someone other than the Dunklins operated both businesses. That is until the

current Jim Dunklin reclaimed the family hardware store.

“I walked the floors for 11 years,” said Jim, who since 2003 has been an off-site owner. He returned to banking as a primary profession, now serving as regional president of First Citizens Bank of Luverne.

“I was there nonstop, 10-hour days, plus Saturdays,” he said. He still goes by the hardware store every day, either in the morning or evening. “I take all the bills home and write the checks,” he said.

Today, the store’s biggest sellers are plumbing and electrical goods sold to contractors.

Like most hardware stores, Greenville Hardware also sells emergency supplies that are tax free during the last full weekend of February in Alabama.

“The largest month we’ve ever had in the history of the store since I’ve owned it” came after the 100 mph winds of Hurricane Ivan ripped through Greenville in September 2004, Jim said. In that one month, Greenville Hardware sold a lot of tarps and generators, but those items are available year-round, and Jim recommends stocking up on emergency supplies Feb. 21-23 when many of those items are tax free. ■



*Jim Dunklin has owned 129-year-old Greenville Hardware since 1993. His great-grandfather founded the store in 1891. The store is open 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7 a.m. to noon Saturdays.*

**Learn more about Alabama’s Feb. 21-23 severe weather preparedness sales tax holiday at [alabamaretail.org/alabamasalestaxholidays/](http://alabamaretail.org/alabamasalestaxholidays/)**







# Socially Speaking

THE POSTS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

**“Alabama Retail makes it easier for small businesses to grow.”**

– JIM MOELLER,  
NEW YORK BUTCHER SHOPPE



**#MemberMonday:** Jim Moeller opened his first New York Butcher Shoppe franchise in 2010. He opened a second location in Shelby County's Greystone area in April 2019. The Vestavia Hills Chamber of Commerce CEO describes Jim and his stores as a “dream business.” #ALRetailDay #ALRetailerOfTheYear #AlabamaRetailOnTheRoad #WeLoveOurMembers Oct. 7 four-photo post

**It's Small Business Saturday!** In Alabama, 99% of businesses are small businesses and those businesses employ almost half of the private workforce. #ShopAlabama, #ShopLocal today and #DoubleYourGift! Today is also the day Bromberg's, Alabama's oldest business and America's oldest family owned retailer, lights the Mountain Brook Village Christmas tree. #brombergstree #familyownedandoperated #smallbiz Nov. 30 four-photo post



**It is time to celebrate** all things retail! Thank you, Gov. Kay Ivey for proclaiming Oct. 22 as Alabama Retail Day throughout the state. Take time to shop at your favorite retailer in Alabama and give them a shout out in the comments! Read the official proclamation here: [alretail.org/2W0iyCV](http://alretail.org/2W0iyCV) #ALRetailDay #ShopAlabama Oct. 21 video with link

Get social with us!  
Talk to us about the photos, resources, retail updates and member news we share.

/Alabama Retail

@AlabamaRetail

@ShopAlabama

Stay informed at [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)



**Congratulations** to @tlr\_au on a successful move to a new address. #ShopAlabama ... The Locker Room of Auburn moved right up the street from their previous location on Magnolia Avenue to 175 E. Magnolia Ave. Nov. 4 repost @ShopAlabama

## RECENTLY TWEETED @ALABAMARETAIL

Alabama Retail and the @MGMChamber teamed up to talk about spending your shopping, dining and leisure dollars locally this holiday season. Thanks @SallyPitts\_WSFA for having us! #DoubleYourGift #ShopAlabamaForTheHolidays [pic.twitter.com/EdoAtoHtNT](https://pic.twitter.com/EdoAtoHtNT) Nov. 26 photo





# RETRO RETURN

ALABAMA RETAIL COMP RETURNS \$7 MILLION IN 2020

This year, Alabama Retail Comp will return \$7 million to participants as part of its annual retrospective return.

"We are pleased to announce that we are, once again, making a significant return to participants," said Rick Brown, fund administrator and Alabama Retail Association president. "Every dollar the fund returns helps lower the cost of doing business for our members."

Since its inception in 1984, ARC has returned nearly \$100 MILLION – 26 percent of all premiums collected – to its participants through what is known as its Retro Return plan.

Each Retro Return is composed of excess funds ARC's trustees have set aside from previous fund years. As the need to hold money in reserves decreases in a given year, that year's participants receive money back as a credit on their next renewal. The retrospective rating plan uses an actuarial formula that takes into account individual participants' experience versus the experience of the Fund as a whole. Lower losses return a higher retro credit at renewal, rewarding participants for providing a safe work environment.

## RETROSPECTIVE RETURN DISTRIBUTION FOR 2020

ARC's \$7 million retrospective return for 2020 will be distributed from fund years as follows:

2018	\$2,000,000
2017	\$1,000,000
2016	\$1,000,000
2015	\$1,000,000
2014	\$1,000,000
2013	\$500,000
2007 - 2011	\$100,000 each
Total 2020 Return	\$7,000,000

Although a retrospective return is never guaranteed, Alabama Retail Comp is committed to conservative underwriting and aggressive claims management to continue returning funds to participants.



"We joined the Alabama Retail Association for the benefit of being able to participate in the workers'

compensation plan," said

**JIM WHALEY**, owner of Dothan-based **JIM WHALEY TIRES INC.** "It best suits our needs."

More than 4,300 Alabama Retail members participate in the fund.

ARC specializes in the retail industry, but also provides coverage to an array of business employers.

Fund Manager Mark Young said, "At ARC, our goal is simple: To provide the most cost-effective workers' compensation coverage to Alabama businesses with unparalleled customer service."

 **To find out more including a full Retro Return history, visit [alabamaretail.org/comp/retrospective/](http://alabamaretail.org/comp/retrospective/)**

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BETTER TOGETHER

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# Together We Are the Leading Voice and Resource for Retailers in Our State

Retail in Alabama is better when we join together.

Whether voicing the retail view when public policy is made, negotiating rates for benefits and services or communicating the retail story, the 4,300 members of the Alabama Retail Association are better together.

Take advantage of all your association has to offer.

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**“The Alabama Retail Association looks out for small businesses like ours. It makes sure small business has a voice, a seat at the table in legislative affairs. Without the association, our voices would go unheard.”**

**-JACOB SHEVIN, STANDARD FURNITURE CO.**

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## Legislative Clout

Your membership gives us the power to stop laws that interfere with your business and help shape laws that let your business succeed.

## Cost-Effective Workers' Compensation Coverage

The greatest benefit of ARA membership is the workers' compensation coverage available through Alabama Retail Comp. You get great rates, expert claims handling and exceptional service. Excess income comes back to you in the form of an annual retro return (see Page 19 to learn more).

## In-Depth Communication

Whether posts or issue briefs on [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org), timely email communications, real-time social media posts or stories in our magazine Alabama Retailer, ARA keeps you informed on the latest regulatory, legal, legislative and business issues affecting your business.

## Industry Recognition

Through its Alabama Retailer of the Year and Centennial Retailer awards program, telling the retail story and media interaction on consumer spending and shopping trends, ARA spotlights outstanding retailers in our state and the contributions they make to our communities and economy.

 **Visit us at [alabamaretail.org](http://alabamaretail.org)**