



*Leadership*  
**WEAKLEY COUNTY**

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**MEET THE  
CLASS OF 2025**



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# Baylee Arnott

## Prevention and Community Outreach

Baylee Arnott is currently transitioning to new professional opportunities, bringing valuable experience from her previous work in substance abuse awareness and prevention, and community outreach.



Along with her work, Baylee has been involved in community organizations. She has assisted with the Tennessee Soybean Festival and served as the assistant coach for the Westview High School girls' soccer team, where she focused on practice planning and skills development.

Through Leadership Weakley County, Baylee aims to enhance her skills in communication, decision-making, and leadership while building a network of professional contacts who work together to foster strategic thinking. She recognizes limited economic diversification as a local challenge, citing its impact on job opportunities and income disparities. Baylee advocates for solutions like supporting small businesses, improving infrastructure, and workforce development. She also values Weakley County's strong sense of community, social bonds, affordability, safety, and quality of life.

Baylee holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from UT Martin and a Master's degree in Forensic Psychology from Nova Southeastern University. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D.

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# Kurt Baggett

**Commercial and Ag Lender  
First Citizens National Bank in Martin**

Kurt Baggett is a commercial and agricultural lender at First Citizens National Bank. He works with clients to provide financial solutions for agriculture and business needs.



Along with his work, Kurt has been involved in several community and civic organizations, including serving as a board member for Obion County Cal Ripken and the United Way of Obion County, and Chimes for Charity. He is a Graduate of the Obion County Adult Leadership Program and the Ag Star Program. He was also the recipient of the Obion County United Way's Going the Extra Mile Award.

Through Leadership Weakley County, Kurt hopes to broaden his network and gain insights into the businesses that contribute to Weakley County's development. He has identified the decreasing population as a challenge for the county and looks forward to exploring solutions. Kurt also values Weakley County's community-oriented environment and the presence of a local university as a positive aspect of life in the area.

Kurt holds a degree from the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and has attended the LSU Graduate School of Banking.

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# Barrett Belote

## **Fitness and Facility Coordinator Campus Recreation, UT Martin**



Barrett Belote is the Fitness and Facility Coordinator for Campus Recreation at the University of Tennessee at Martin. In his work at the university, he supervises a team of 60 to 70, manages the daily activities of the facility, organizes fitness schedules, assists with special events, teaches a class twice weekly for faculty and staff, and much more.

Along with his work at the university, Barrett has served as a member of the TN Soybean Festival Event Staff, Westview High School Assistant High School Soccer Coach, Magical Martin Day volunteer, and is very active in a variety of roles at the First United Methodist Church.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, he hopes to grow his leadership skills, learn more about the county's history, and to collaborate and build new relationships with other local leaders. Barrett believes that creating more opportunities for entertainment in the county is needed, and he highlights community involvement and affordable higher education as positive aspects of living in Weakley County.

Barrett attended UT Martin, earning a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Education, Higher Education Leadership.



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# Hannah Bilger

**Community Engagement Coordinator,  
Weakley County Prevention Coalition**

In her role with the WCPC, Hannah Bilger focuses on building and maintaining relationships between organizations and their communities. Through planning, implementing outreach programs, facilitating communication, and encouraging community initiatives, Hannah works to foster collaboration and enhance community well-being to drive positive change in Weakley County.



Outside of his work at the university, Hannah is an active member and financial secretery for the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. She is also a member of the Young Alumni Council and UP Outreach, Inc., in which she has help pass out more than 1,000 boxes of food in the community.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, she hopes to build connections, enhance communications between community members to ensure that diverse voices are represented. Hannah believes that a critical challenge facing the county is addressing the stigma surrounding substance abuse and prevention efforts, but she contributes community spirit and affordable living as highlights to living in Weakley County.

Hannah attended UT Martin, earning a Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Communications.

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# Kayla Colvin

**Youth Engagement Coordinator  
Martin Housing Authority  
Weakley County Prevention Coalition**



In her work with Martin Housing Authority and WCPC, Kayla Colvin works with middle and high school leaders, teachers, and students to provide education on substance misuse. She also assists with community events regarding prevention and recovery.

Along with her work, Kayla has been on two mission trips to Honduras. She also worked as an intern for the Carl Perkins Center, served as Team Leader for the Tennessee Teen Institute, and was a leader for students attending CADCA in Chicago, IL.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Kayla aims to connect with other young professionals in the area to exchange ideas, offer support, and build her network. She hopes to better understand the resources available in Weakley County and strengthen her connections within the community. Kayla recognizes substance abuse, particularly fentanyl and underage consumption, as critical challenges in the county and believes that addressing these issues will have a lasting positive impact on the community. She values the spirit of charity and support shown by the people of Weakley County and looks forward to being a part of that effort.

Kayla attended UT Martin, earning a Bachelor's degree in Social Work.

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# Olivia Fernandez

**ITS Director  
Client Services & Support, UT Martin**



In her work in ITS, Olivia Fernandez provides leadership, direction, and supervision for the IT Help Desk, Computer Repair, AV, Distance Learning System Administrators, and Multifunctional Device Teams. She also manages a number of budgets, oversees procurement of devices and software, develops service level agreements, and develops workshops on classroom technology use.

Along with her work at the university, Olivia is the UTM Latin Hispanic Student Association Advisor, UTM Computer Science Advisory Board, and UTM 24-25 Strategic Plan Steering Committee. She is a member of Weakley County Young Professionals, Martin Kiwanis Club, UTM Young Alumni Council, and is a UTM Chi Omega Xi Zeta Financial Advisor. She's also an active member of Ruthville Missionary Baptist Church.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, she hopes to expand her leadership skills, network and collaborate with local leaders, and to gain appreciation and understanding of the county. She aspires to play an active role in shaping a prosperous and inclusive future for Weakley County.

Olivia attended UT Martin, earning a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in Business Administration, a second Master's in Information Sciences from UT Knoxville, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Leadership and Decision Making from UT Chattanooga.

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# Dale Hutcherson

## Weakley County Mayor

Elected in Fall 2024, Dale Hutcherson serves as Weakley County Mayor, collaborating with community leaders and officials to address county issues, manage the budget, and advocate for the county's growth and development.



Along with his work as County Mayor, Dale is an active member of the First Baptist Church in Dresden and is a volunteer fireman for the Dresden Fire Department. He is a member of the Dresden Rotary Club, TN Bar Association, Weakley County Bar Association, Rhodes College Young Alumni Council, and the Dresden Elks Lodge. He has also been involved with the Memphis Bar Association, University of Memphis Bar Association, University of Memphis Law Review, and American Bar Association. He was a 2009 Graduate of the Youth Leadership Weakley County Program.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Dale aims to deepen his understanding of the county's industries, build strong relationships, and contribute to a community project that enhances Weakley County's potential. He recognizes challenges such as housing, transportation, and child care, but values the county's strong schools, tight-knit communities, and affordability.

Dale earned a Bachelor's degree in History and Political Science from Rhodes College, a Sports Law Certificate from the University of Oregon, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law.



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# Meagan Jones

## Commercial Portfolio Manager Simmons Bank in Martin

In her role as a Commercial Portfolio Manager at Simmons Bank, Meagan Jones works with lenders across Tennessee to manage loan portfolios, complete cash flows and memos, and ensure efficient loan processes. She also mentors and trains lending staff to support their professional growth.



Along with her work, Meagan has been involved in various community and civic organizations. She has served as President of the Martin Rotary Club, participated in Weakley County Young Professionals, and is a member of the City of Martin Planning Committee. Meagan is an active member of First United Methodist Church, where she has worked with youth groups and helped with Vacation Bible School.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Meagan hopes to gain a deeper understanding of local industries and identify opportunities for growth. She sees retaining current industries while attracting new ones as a critical challenge for the county. However, she highlights the county's strong sense of togetherness, inclusiveness, and its excellent educational opportunities as key strengths that make it an exceptional place to live and raise a family.

Meagan earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from UT Martin, holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from Tennessee Tech University, and is a graduate of the Barrett School of Banking.

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# Sara Jane Kendall

## Auditor II CRS CPA

Sara Jane Kendall serves as an Auditor II at CRS CPA, where she prepares approximately 500 tax returns each tax season. During the rest of the year, she performs audit fieldwork and supervises newer audit staff while traveling across West Tennessee and Kentucky to audit governmental, nonprofit, and private entities.



Along with her work, Sara Jane is a member of the Tennessee Society of Certified Public Accountants, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, and the Association of Government Accountants. She has been a lifelong member of Cool Springs Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where she plays the flute and assists in the nursery. She also volunteers with Civitan International, helping shop for Christmas presents for special needs children.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Sara Jane hopes to enhance her networking skills and build confidence as she progresses in her career. She has identified the need for more community outreach by businesses as a critical challenge facing Weakley County and believes such initiatives can strengthen local connections, but she appreciates the genuine and supportive individuals she has encountered in Weakley County, from professors at UTM to her mentors at CRS CPA.

Sara Jane earned her Bachelor's degree in Accounting & Finance and Economics from UT Martin, and successfully passed the CPA exam in 2023.

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# Nathaniel Newlin

## **Branch and Marketing Manager First Community Bank of the Heartland**

Nathaniel Newlin is the Branch and Marketing Manager for First Community Bank of the Heartland in Martin, overseeing the downtown Martin branch, the online branch, and the bank's marketing efforts across all locations.



Along with his work, Nathaniel is actively involved in various organizations. He has volunteered with Discovery Park of America, providing STEM programming for field trips and virtual learning. As a lecturer for the Tennessee Naturalist Program since 2020, he leads annual field excursions focusing on geology and ecology. He stays involved with Sigma Gamma Epsilon, has conducted paleontology research through UT Martin, and has even had his research featured by the Tennessee Academy of Science.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Nathaniel hopes to deepen his understanding of the economic, political, and social forces shaping the county and become a more effective servant of the community. He is particularly passionate about improving quality of life for nursing home residents in Northwest TN. He believes that these challenges can be addressed by advocating for better living conditions and organizing community support. Nathaniel also recognizes political cohesion, social acceptance, and resources for residents of all ages as Weakley County highlights.

Nathaniel has earned many academic achievements along with earning a Bachelor's degree in Geoscience from UT Martin, and he is currently working on earning a Master's in Business Administration.

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# Dr. Michael O'Neill

## Director of Public Safety, Police Chief UT Martin

Michael O'Neill serves as the Director of Public Safety and Chief of Police at UT Martin. He oversees campus security, emergency response, and crisis management while implementing strategic safety plans and fostering collaborations with local law enforcement and emergency services to maintain a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff.



Along with his work, Michael is a board member of the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police University Committee and a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is an active member of the Southern Police Institute Alumni Association and the Honorable Order of Kentucky Colonels. He has served as President and Steward of Law Enforcement Labor Services, a mentor for the El Paso Veterans Court, and a board member of the Ramsey County Community Corrections Advisory Board.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Michael seeks to deepen his understanding of the county and identify ways to contribute to its growth. He has identified economic challenges, including poverty and unemployment, as critical issues and sees opportunities to increase wages and job availability in the region. He highlights the welcoming and supportive environment of Weakley County, its agricultural abundance, and the dedication of local leaders working to improve the community.

Michael holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration from Walden University, a Master's degree in Business Administration and a graduate certificate in Public Administration from Columbia Southern University, and a graduate certificate in Police Executive Leadership Development from the Southern Police Institute at the University of Louisville. He also holds a Bachelor's degree from Columbia College and an Associate degree in Law Enforcement from Century College.



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# Benjamin Ort

## **Assistant Director of First Year Experience Office of Student Success, UT Martin**

Benjamin Ort oversees First-Year Experience at the University of Tennessee at Martin, including programming, curriculum development, and facilitation of the First-Year Seminar course. He also leads faculty, staff, and student trainings for those involved in teaching or assisting with the course.



Along with his work, Benjamin is actively involved in several community and professional organizations. He serves on the Welcome Weekend Planning Committee at UT Martin, is a Deacon at his church, a board member and volunteer for YoungLife, an IFC Advisor, and a member of the Ned Ray McWherter Institute.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Benjamin hopes to continue his education and expand his network to better serve both his university and the Weakley County area. He is passionate about his county and eager to deepen his understanding of it. Benjamin identifies voter registration and voter turnout as a critical challenges in Weakley County, suggesting the potential for the Election Commission to collaborate with UT Martin to register students and provide transportation or mail-in ballot services. One of his favorite aspects of living in Weakley County is the warm, welcoming atmosphere that makes it feel like home. He is proud to raise his family in a county that is looking for ways to grow.

Benjamin holds a Master's degree in Higher Education Leadership and a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management, both from UT Martin.

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# Jessica Baker Quinton

**Historic Preservation Planner & Housing Coordinator  
Northwest Tennessee Development District**



Jessica Baker Quinton is the Historic Preservation Planner and Housing Coordinator at the Northwest Tennessee Development District [NWTDD]. She serves the nine counties in northwest Tennessee by providing technical support for historic preservation, which includes writing National Register of Historic Places nominations, administering grants, conducting environmental reviews, and performing historic surveys. In her housing role, she writes and manages grants from the Tennessee Housing Development Agency to help local governments improve housing conditions in their communities.

Along with her work, Jessica is actively involved in the community. She serves at Calvary Baptist Church in Union City as a Vacation Bible School teacher and as a cheer coach and commissioner for Upward. She participates in the Upward Committee, the History Committee, and serves as the Nursery Worker/Team Captain for children aged 0-5. She also contributes to fundraising and school development efforts at Central Christian Academy in Martin.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Jessica hopes to expand her knowledge of the county and strengthen her community ties. Jessica has identified the housing shortage and the difficulty many homeowners face in maintaining older homes as a challenge in the county, but values Weakley County's rich agricultural heritage, thriving small businesses, and strong educational opportunities.

Jessica holds an Associate's degree in History from Dyersburg State Community College and earned a Bachelor's degree in History from UT Martin.

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# Kim Robinson

**Branch Operations Leader  
Cadence Bank, Dresden**



Kim Robinson is the Branch Operations Leader at Cadence Bank in Dresden, where she oversees the daily operations of the branch, including managing teller services, balancing daily reports, and coordinating vault operations. She is dedicated to ensuring smooth and efficient customer service at the bank, as well as providing guidance and support to the tellers.

Along with her work, Kim is an active member of the Lebanon Church of Christ and participates in the Partners in Education (PIE) program at Dresden Elementary, where she works with first-grade students. Through PIE, Kim visits the school monthly to read with the children and educate them on financial concepts such as the difference between wants and needs. She also introduces them to banking services and rewards their savings habits with prizes, encouraging financial literacy from a young age.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Kim hopes to learn more about the developments and opportunities in Weakley County, particularly within government, industry, and education. She looks forward to gaining a deeper understanding of what each community has to offer and building new connections and friendships with others involved in local initiatives. One critical challenge she has identified in Weakley County is the need for more industry and affordable housing. Kim is passionate about exploring ways to address these issues to support the county's growth and sustainability. A positive aspect of Weakley County that Kim values is the sense of community, where residents come together to support each other during festivals, sporting events, and times of tragedy.

Kim holds a degree from Dyersburg State Community College.

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# Krystle Smith

**Administrator, Personal Development Center  
Attendance Coordinator  
Weakley County Schools**



Krystle Smith is the Administrator of the Weakley County Personal Development Center and Attendance Coordinator for Weakley County Schools. She oversees all attendance matters for the school district and works to support students and families in improving attendance. In her role as Administrator, she manages the Personal Development Center in Dresden, ensuring its services align with district goals.

Along with her work, Krystle has been involved in several organizations, including working with youth basketball teams at the Lynnville Church of Christ. She is a member of TOSS for professional development in administrative roles and works closely with the Weakley County Juvenile Court system and state attorneys to conduct welfare checks and connect families with services to improve student attendance.

Through the Leadership Weakley County Program, Krystle aims to gain a deeper understanding of the county's resources and identify innovative ways to address challenges and foster improvement. Krystle has identified the lack of industry as a critical issue, emphasizing the importance of creating employment opportunities for high school graduates, highlighting education's role in equipping students with workforce skills, and recognizing the school system's commitment to supporting students and families as one of Weakley County's greatest strengths.

Krystle earned a Bachelor's degree in Education from UT Martin and Master's degree in Educational Administration from Bethel University.



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# Dr. Laura Taylor

**Fitness Manager and Facility Operations  
West TN Healthcare Sports Plus Sports Medicine**

Dr. Laura Taylor serves as the Fitness Manager at Martin Wellness Center, Sports Plus Sports Medicine. In her role, she manages the center's daily operations, oversees staff, and provides wellness and fitness programs tailored to individuals in rehabilitation or seeking to maintain their health.



Along with her work, Laura is active in several community and professional organizations. She is the current president of Martin Kiwanis, where she has held various leadership roles. She volunteers with Martin Parks and Rec as a coach for youth soccer and softball and serves on the media team and as a children's small group teacher at Crosswind Church. Laura is a certified high school volleyball official through TSSAA and contributes to the West Tennessee Healthcare Activities Committee by organizing events for employees.

Through the Leadership Weakley County program, Laura aims to gain a deeper understanding of policy development and implementation, as well as the needs and opportunities across the county's communities. She identifies teacher retention as a critical issue, emphasizing the importance of supporting veteran educators to ensure new teachers have experienced mentors. Laura highlights Weakley County as a family-friendly area with strong community connections and praises the local school system for its exceptional educators.

Laura holds a Bachelor's degree in K-12 Physical Education and Health from UT Martin, a Master's degree in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation from Emporia State University, and earned her Ph.D. in Higher Educational Leadership from Union University. She is certified as a CPR instructor, NASM personal trainer, and Silver Sneakers instructor.

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# Greg Walker

**Human Resources Coordinator  
Northwest Tennessee Human Resources Agency**

Greg Walker is the Human Resources Coordinator for Northwest Tennessee Human Resources Agency. In this role, he assists with the new hire process and onboarding documentation, maintains driver personnel folders, manages FMLA and workers' compensation documentation, and ensures compliance in corrective action files.



Along with his work, Greg is actively pursuing his academic goals. He is currently working on earning his bachelor's degree and plans to pursue a Master of Business Administration in the future.

Through the Leadership Weakley County program, Greg hopes to network with other professionals and gain insights and resources to advance his career. He identifies economic challenges in Weakley County, including low wages, high rent, and the strain of inflation, as critical issues. Greg believes addressing these concerns is essential for fostering a better quality of life for residents.

Greg views the sense of community in Weakley County as one of its greatest strengths. Living in Martin, he values the care and connection among its residents and remains optimistic about opportunities to help the area thrive.

Greg is currently in the process of earning his Bachelor's degree.



*Leadership*

**WEAKLEY COUNTY**

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**CHAMBER TEAM**





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# Erica Miller Moore

**Director, Weakley County Chamber of Commerce  
Leadership Weakley County Programs Facilitator**

Erica Miller Moore is the Director of the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce and the facilitator of the youth and adult leadership programs for Weakley County. In this role, she lead efforts to support local businesses, foster economic growth, and strengthen connections between businesses, government, and the community.



Erica is a 2023 graduate of the Leadership Tennessee Next Program, a 2019 graduate of the WestStar Leadership Program, and a 2017 Leadership Weakley County graduate. She has served in various leadership capacities, including the Leadership Weakley County Board, Dresden Rotary Club, Weakley County Young Professionals, WestStar Alumni Council, American Advertising Federation, Weakley County Civil Rights Board, NWTNDD AAAD Council, Bicentennial Steering Committee, and Tennessee Iris Festival Executive Board. She also volunteers with various organizations to include the Weakley County Backpack Program, Thunderbolt Radio, and various other local charitable organizations.

Erica views the Leadership Weakley County Program as an essential investment in the county's future. The program equips participants with the knowledge, connections, and skills necessary to lead with purpose. She sees the program as a bridge between diverse industries, local talent, and innovative solutions, ensuring that every participant leaves with a deeper understanding of the county's potential and the confidence to contribute to its growth and vitality.

Erica earned a Bachelor's degree from UT Martin in Communications and Public Relations.



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# Justin Crice

**CEO, Weakley County Chamber & Economic Development Board**



Justin Crice is the CEO of the Weakley County Chamber and Economic Development Board. In this role, he focuses on advancing economic development opportunities for rural West Tennessee. He works to attract new businesses, support existing industries, and champion initiatives that promote workforce development, infrastructure growth, and community revitalization. He collaborates with local leaders, educators, and stakeholders to create strategies that strengthen Weakley County's economic landscape and ensure long-term sustainability.

Justin believes that the Leadership Weakley County Program provides participants with a unique opportunity to explore the county's industries, understand its challenges, and connect with a diverse network of leaders. The program fosters collaboration and equips participants with the tools to address critical issues, such as workforce development and infrastructure needs, while celebrating Weakley County's strong community ties, affordability, and cultural richness. By engaging in meaningful discussions and hands-on experiences, participants leave the program better prepared to contribute to the county's growth and success.

Along with serving on many boards and committees, Justin is an active member of the First United Methodist Church in Martin. He has served as the Volunteer Services Coordinator at Reelfoot Rural Ministries and municipal planning roles in both Georgia and Kentucky.

Justin earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Murray State University and a Master's degree in Public Administration from Western Kentucky University.