

Montgomery Citizens' Leadership Academy, Class of 2024

Erin Alexander



A life long Cincinnati native - I grew up in Springfield Township, graduated from Roger Bacon High School in St. Bernard and went on to Ohio University for my undergraduate and graduate degrees in Speech Language Pathology. I returned to Cincinnati and met my husband, Pete in downtown Montgomery. We have lived in Montgomery for 21 years. We have 3 teenagers who attend Sycamore High School and 2 dogs. I am currently working as a Director of Therapy for Life Enriching Communities overseeing 6 therapy departments in 3 Ohio cities- one being Twin Lakes right here in Montgomery. I enjoy reading, walking the dogs around Montgomery, watching my children's sporting events of baseball, cross country, and golf, and spending time with friends and family. I am excited to learn more about the community I live and work in!

Valerie Badinghaus



I was born in St. Louis and, yes, I am a big Cardinals baseball fan! I am married to Steve (for 42 years) and we have lived on Thistlewood Court for 37 years. We have three grown children, five grandchildren, and a 12 year old dog named Ginger. I went to Good Sam's School of Nursing. I was an RN at Good Sam until about 1996, then became a nanny for several years, and ended up returning to nursing to do in-home care until 2020, when I retired. I am a volunteer at several places—the NEEDS Pantry in Kenwood, our parish (St. Gertrude in Madeira), Hospice of Cincinnati and our beloved Montgomery (doing flower basket planting and holiday decorating). My husband and I are big Xavier Musketeer fans also. I love spending time with my grandchildren and traveling.

Chris Beech



My husband, Bob, and I moved to Montgomery in 1983. We have enjoyed all the attributes Montgomery has had to offer over the years. We have raised three wonderful children. I have recently retired from working at Sycamore Community Schools. To participate in the Montgomery Citizens' Leadership Academy is on my bucket list. I look forward to learning more about the ins and outs of our community.

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Robbe Bluestein

We moved to Montgomery almost two years ago and share our house with my daughter, son-in-law and two dogs. We moved from a loft in Camp Washington where I served two terms as President of the Community Council. I am a graduate of the City Council Boot Camp in Cincinnati. Currently retired, I am a Veteran Volunteer at Hospice of Cincinnati.



Laura Deemer

Our family moved to Cincinnati in 2019 from Atlanta, GA. Georgia is home for me, and where my husband and I met. Shortly after having our first child (girl) in 2018, we began investing in real estate in Cincinnati and decided to make a permanent move. We love the change of pace and quality of life we've found in Cincinnati! We welcomed our second child (boy) in 2021. After living in a couple of different neighborhoods we landed in Montgomery and haven't looked back. I "retired" last year from my corporate career as an Account Manager for a software company. My husband continues his career in Sales, so I'm holding down the fort in this new chapter of life. I hope to be more involved in the Montgomery community because I think it's important to invest time and energy into where you live. This is our chosen community and we look forward to raising our kids here!



China Dostal

My family and I moved to Montgomery in 2023 from Chicago. We have a 4th grader who keeps us busy and laughing. I work in IT for a healthcare company and enjoy quilting in my free time. We have a small dog that we love to walk in our beautiful new city. My husband is a librarian and a bread baker. We are so thankful for all the wonderful aspects of living here and I look forward to learning much more from MCLA.

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Nick Dougherty

Born and raised in Cincinnati, my wife Grace and I are University of Cincinnati alumni. I attended Sycamore High School, where I captained the football team in 2012 and later coached both at the high school (Sycamore) and university levels (UC). Armed with degrees in Mathematics and Economics, I recently moved back to Montgomery with Grace from Fayetteville, AR. I am currently employed with Procter & Gamble, eager to contribute to the vibrant community. Passionate about Montgomery's unique charm, I look forward to meeting and connecting with fellow residents.



Tim Dougherty

I was born, raised, live and work in Cincinnati. My wife, Christy, and I moved back to Montgomery in September of 2023. We are proud parents of our son, Wells, and expecting our second in June of 2024. Growing up in Montgomery and attending Sycamore High School and Ursuline Academy, we always knew we wanted to make our way back "home" and feel so fortunate to be here. I work as a Financial Advisor at Wealth Planning Corporation. Very excited to learn even more about the wonderful City of Montgomery and having the opportunity to meet fellow citizens.



Paula Ekstedt

I am married to Terry Ekstedt. We both grew up in Montgomery and are graduates of Sycamore HS as well as UC. We have two children- Jimmy and Ellie (one UC grad, the other to graduate next spring). I am in my 43rd year of teaching at Western Brown HS. My father was mayor of Montgomery in the 70s.

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Aaron Flicker

After going to high school in Cincinnati, I moved back in 2006 and have lived in Montgomery since 2009. I was a journalist for 13 years, with eight of those as a copy editor at the Cincinnati Enquirer. I then switched careers to data analysis and worked in homeless services. I now work for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, helping the hospital and outside organizations improve their processes.



Dennis Foster

I have lived in the Cincinnati area since kindergarten. I was a news photographer for channel 5, then software development and consulting. I have lived pretty much all over town, west, east, and downtown. I moved to my current home in Landen in 1990. I began working at Great American Insurance Group in 2007 and retired in 2018. My wife of 31 years passed away in 2020. Now I teach photography in the OLLI program at UC. I have rejoined the Rotary Club of Northeast Cincinnati - my connection to Montgomery. I like to travel, sail, and take photos. On Fridays, I pick up my grandkids at school for playtime, then head to their home in Tusculum for family dinner with the rest of the family. This Citizen's Leadership Academy is a rare opportunity to learn more about a community that is doing so many things right.



Bryan Gunn

I've lived in Cincinnati since I was 8 years old, growing up in Mariemont and attending Miami University. My wife, Laura, and I are Miami Mergers. We moved to Montgomery in 2016 with our two sons, Austin and Owen. I've worked at Fifth Third Bank for 15 years, currently leading a team of business analysts. Most of my spare time is dedicated to my kid's activities including Cub Scouts and a variety of sports. I am excited to have this opportunity to discover more about this wonderful community.

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Sheela Kamath



I am a Houstonian originally where I completed my B.S. in Biology and Chemistry and medical school in Fort Worth, TX. I wanted to explore the country and went to Providence, RI where I met my husband, Suresh while completing our medical residency together. He came to Cincinnati to complete his fellowship in Nephrology at University of Cincinnati which brought us both here to make this city our home in 2001. We have one son who is in college studying to be a Chemical Engineer at University of California, Berkeley. I have been practicing Internal Medicine at the VA since 2003. I enjoy seeing our veterans and am honored to be their physician for all these years. We love this city as it has so much to offer and encourage our incoming residents and fellows to make this their home.

Bill McBrayer



My Wife Charlotte and three sons moved to Montgomery in 1991. Our oldest son was in Cleveland attending college. #2 son was enrolled at Univ. Of Cincinnati as a Freshman and our youngest was an 8th grader in middle school. The decision to relocate from Southeast Ohio was based on various factors. We chose Montgomery for the school system, the small-town atmosphere, and convenient access to shopping, restaurants, and major league sports. Another important factor was the proximity to CVG to facilitate my job which required extensive domestic and international travel. I retired from my corporate job in 2015, I'm currently involved with my wife with our real estate holdings, also I'm partner with my oldest son in McBrayer Legacy Spirits. We have enjoyed our 32 years living in Montgomery and look forward to learning more about this amazing city.

Cindy Moore



I am a transplanted Cincinnati who moved to the area when I was in Jr High. I recall thinking as a teen, what a beautiful area Montgomery was, so it seemed destined that when our family was growing, my husband and I would move to Montgomery. We have now lived in Montgomery for more than 11 years and our family includes two girls in the Sycamore school system and two dogs. I work as a specialty pharmacist where I really enjoy developing new ways to help patients manage their chronic and complex diseases and I can frequently be seen on an early morning run or a long weekend walk through the fantastic neighborhoods of our city. I am excited to learn more about this great community!

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Ryan Mount



I moved to Cincinnati in 2013 to be with my now wife after meeting through our Roller Derby leagues. We now have two kids. I began my career in Group Health Insurance for Lang Financial Group in 2015 after five years in the nonprofit sector in Philadelphia and Cincinnati. I served on the Board of Directors and Vice President for The Montgomery Chamber of Commerce from 2018-2022. With my free time, I serve on multiple boards and committees for Temple Shalom of Cincinnati and spiritual mentoring through another organization. I am looking forward to reconnecting with Montgomery after stepping down from the Chamber Board, along with creating new friendships, building a new network of other leaders, and rediscovering my passion for local government.

Colleen Neal



I grew up in Southeastern PA and attended graduate school at Indiana University (Go Hoosiers!). I relocated to Cincinnati to work at P&G where I have been an Analytical Chemist for 15 years. My husband – a Cincinnati native – and I met in graduate school and have four children. We lived in Oakley before moving next to Swaim Park in Montgomery in 2015. We love our neighborhood parks, street festivals, trees, and, of course, Sycamore School District. I am excited to learn more about our community and to become more involved!

Rich Nicholson



I moved to Cincinnati in 2004 to begin my career at GE Aerospace after completing my Bachelors and Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Akron. My wife, Kami and I moved to Montgomery in 2014 so that our kids (Walker (11) and Piper (9)) could be a part of this great school district in Sycamore! Kami, Owner of White Lotus Studios Photography, has continued to build her business with amazing clients throughout Montgomery and beyond. I am still at GE Aerospace as an Engineering Manager and have enjoyed coaching Sycamore Youth Football for the last few years. I'm looking forward to learning more about our city!

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Ellen Owens

My family was transferred to Cincinnati in 1988 from my birthplace of Memphis. I received a Bachelor's in Education from Fontbonne University in St. Louis and a Master's in Education from Xavier. I have 2 daughters who graduated from Sycamore in 1998 and 2000 who are both Nurse Practitioners. My husband retired from Procter and Gamble. I taught for 42 years-25 in Sycamore as the Hearing-Impaired Specialist. I'm active in Ohio politics. I'm excited to be in the MCLA class of 2024!



Brien Polivka

My wife, Johna, and I moved back to Cincinnati in August of 2023 after living in her hometown of Chillicothe since 2020. I am a chiropractor at Loveland Chiropractic offices off Loveland-Madeira Rd. Community involvement has always been very important to me; I am currently spending my off days providing volunteer care for the Care Center of Loveland and working with athletes at the local schools. I look forward to learning more about our community and seeing how I can help it continue to thrive.



Victor Ronis-Tobin

My wife Audrey and our three kids moved to Montgomery from NY in 2014. We met at The Ohio State University. I am Israeli American, and my wife is a native Cincinnati. I am a Clinical Health Psychologist by training, and have been the Director of the Xavier Center for Population Health for the last five years. Much of my work addresses the interaction between community and healthcare. We love our neighborhood, and our community, our schools and parks. I am looking forward to learning more about Montgomery, and the role we could play in its thriving future.

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John Schumacher



My wife, Patricia, and I moved to Montgomery in 2013. We have lived in Cincinnati for 30 years and raised our family here. As a pharmacist, I have worked in healthcare my entire professional career before retiring in 2018. We have a son and daughter that both currently live in Cincinnati raising their families. I am a veteran of the USAF. I currently enjoy playing golf and interacting with our grandchildren. I currently volunteer my time as a member of the Vintage Club HOA Finance Committee as well as chairperson for the Vintage Club Infrastructure Committee. I am excited about the MCLA program and the opportunity to learn more about the people, departments, framework, and functions that contribute to making the community of Montgomery such a great place to live.

Steve Silverman



Steve Silverman is a 32-year resident of the City and is the Village Green subdivision Community Leader. He is an active voice on City-wide Community Development proposals and works diligently with City staff to improve the safety of his neighborhood.

Steve has won numerous awards for Magazine and Newspaper writing and photography. He also has been honored for his accomplishments in County-wide Community Development programs.

Steve enjoys following the University Missouri football program where his granddaughter is the team reporter. Other hobbies include training his Service Dog.

Scott Stoelting



My wife, Janice and I have lived in North Cincinnati suburbs until recently when we moved to Twin Lakes Senior Living in Montgomery. We have four children and six granddaughters. Work experiences include Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals and Luxottica Retail/EyeMed in Mason. As a SCORE volunteer I helped entrepreneurs start their own business. We are very active in the Twin Lakes Community and want to share all the great resources Montgomery has to offer current and prospective Twin Lakes residents.

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Joe Westling

My wife, Amy, and I moved to Montgomery 5 years ago so we could be close to Bethesda North and instantly fell in love with the city. We have a 21-month old daughter, Sofia and a dog-Kona. I work in the personal care/cosmetics arena locally. Cooking/smoking food, golfing, supporting local are some of my favorite activities. We enjoy going to local parks, traveling and staying active as a family. I am excited to learn more about the inner workings of Montgomery!



Brad Wittenbaum

Born and raised in Cincinnati, I graduated from Finneytown High School in 1987 and Ohio State in 1991. My family and I moved to Montgomery in 2009 and previously lived in Blue Ash. I have been in the insurance industry for over 30 years and enjoy volunteering at the Western and Southern Open tennis tournament. My wife works with me in my family business and our four kids have graduated from Sycamore High School (the last one is actually a senior). I'm looking forward to meeting new people and learning more about the great City of Montgomery.

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Peggy Yang



I moved to Montgomery in Oct 2020. Since then, I have built relationships with my neighbors, the Vintage Club community, and the Vintage Club Women's Book Club. I recently retired from Procter & Gamble as an IT professional for Corp Legal Function. My husband passed away about 9 years ago, we used to live in Anderson Township where we raised our son Frankie Gaw who is a Cincinnati guy but now lives in Seattle, Washington. I have a younger sister who lives in Colorado, the rest of my family (my mom, my older sister, and my son) are in Washington, I am the only one in Ohio. I enjoy hiking, boxing, and going to Orange Theory Fitness (OTF), I am one of the founding members of the OTF in Montgomery. As I am now fully retired, I would like to give back to the community, such as volunteering for my church (Crossroads), Cancer Family Care, Cancer Support Community, or Hospice of Cincinnati, hopefully for the City of Montgomery in the near future. My son Frankie Gaw is a cookbook author/writer, CBS Saturday Morning news featured him for 7 mins back in Dec 2022, featured his cooking and love for Cincinnati including Skyline Chili :-). Speaking of Skyline Chili, I love to eat healthy foods, therefore, I am a big fan of Montgomery Farmers' Market.

Reid Young



My family moved to Montgomery when I was in sixth grade from the west side of Cincinnati. I graduated from Sycamore HS and then the University of Cincinnati, CCM. My father, Fred P. Young, was Montgomery Mayor from 1976-1980.

My interests include both music and business. I have been busy being both a Realtor and musician for 40 years. My real estate business has been in and around Montgomery, including building many tear-down McMansions in the early days. My music today is in the form of a nine-piece, horn rock band, Eden. Eden plays festivals, events, and dives including Montgomery's Bastille Day and July 4th Celebration in the Park. Originally, Eden started when I was a freshman at Sycamore, and was reborn 10 years ago at our 40th SHS Class Reunion.

I love still playing my music and helping people with their real estate needs in Montgomery, the greatest place to live! I plan on never stopping. I live in Montgomery with my love, Valerie.