

# FAITH IN THE WORKPLACE

ALUMNI SPEAKER SERIES

*Business*



## COBA Chats

Oct. 25, 2024  
Room 111

What Matters?  
10 a.m.

What Are Our  
Responsibilities?  
11 a.m.

Entrepreneurship  
1 p.m.

Additional  
presentations  
listed on the  
back page.

## Welcome!

Today is our annual Faith and Business Symposium in the Carter College of Business Administration. Homecoming is a busy and fun weekend. We know that today's speakers will provide additional value and great preparation for your future as Christian professionals.

Friday, Oct. 25, we have replaced all business classes with various presentations throughout the day. Attendance at the presentations will be required and reported to your professors.

- Attend a lecture during each regularly scheduled Friday COBA class.
- Dress business casual to make a good impression.
- Be engaged and ready to ask questions.
- Bring a notepad to take notes.



## FAITH AND BUSINESS

*"... inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." — 1 Thessalonians 1:3*



## **Adriana Fuentes Archila**

**Topic: “Am I Qualified for the Job?”**

**2 p.m. | Room 107**

Adriana Fuentes Archila ('17) is the vice president of community development at Arkansas Capital Corporation. In her role, she assists entrepreneurs in obtaining funding and implements ACC's new microlending program. Prior to her current position, she was a business consultant at the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center where she helped minority entrepreneurs start and grow their businesses.

She currently serves as chairman of the board for the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, board member for the Southern Capitol Project, mentor for Entrepreneurship for All. In 2023 Archila was recognized in Arkansas Business' "20 in their Twenties" list and in 2024 was honored as one of Arkansas' Future Icons.

Adriana graduated from Harding in 2017 with a bachelor's in business administration and holds a master's in public relations from The University of Arkansas in Little Rock.

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## **Ron Chase**

**Topic: “What It Takes to be a Successful Entrepreneur”**

**10 a.m. | Room 107**

Ron Chase ('83) is the former owner and CEO of Frog Street, a leading early childhood publishing company focused on curriculum for early childhood classrooms in both public and private schools. After 11 years, he sold Frog Street to a private equity firm in 2017 but continued running it until 2022. Having begun his career in public accounting with Price Waterhouse Chase joined his family's business, Chase Elastomer, where he served as CFO. He was instrumental in building and ultimately selling it to a publicly traded company and then became the general manager for the new owner. Throughout his career, he has been blessed with first hand opportunities to learn all aspects of business including mergers and acquisitions, strategic planning, accounting, sales, operations, product development, human resources, banking and insurance. His experience includes working with companies of all sizes, but his passion lies with small businesses where he can use his entrepreneurial skills and find real purpose in his work.

Today, Chase serves on four boards of both for-profit and nonprofit organizations and is always willing to help entrepreneurs build their business plans. A former Bison football player, he and his wife have three children and three grandchildren and live in Westlake, Texas.

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## **Mark Crews**

**Topic: “Integrity Ain't Easy: Stories from Working in the Gray Zones”**

**10 a.m. | Room 110**

Mark Crews is a retired senior executive and professional engineer with 35 years of experience in the oil and gas manufacturing and services sector for two Fortune 500 companies. He currently serves on Harding's Board of Trustees and the boards of directors of several technology companies. Throughout his career, he managed organizations with more than 3,500 employees, was responsible for achieving more than \$4 billion in sales for his companies, and delivered \$5 billion in mergers and acquisitions transactions. Crews traveled to and managed operations in more than 100 countries for Cameron International and Lufkin Industries and lived overseas for ten years in Singapore and England. He graduated with honors from Texas A&M University and from Harvard Business School's Program for Management Development. He and his wife of 47 years, Roxi ('77), have three children, Meagan ('02), Lauren ('06) and Jonathan ('14), and five grandchildren. The Crewses live in Searcy, Arkansas, and worship with the College Church of Christ.

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## **Gray Dillard**

**Topic: “Blueprint for Success...Depending on your Definition”**

**10 a.m. | Room 112**

Gray Dillard ('91) graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting from Harding and is a licensed CPA (inactive). He joined the audit practice of BKD, LLP in Little Rock, Arkansas, immediately after graduation. In 1994, he joined Arkansas BlueCross BlueShield and for the last 30 years has served the organization in various roles. Today he serves as executive vice president and chief operating officer. He is responsible for the overall operations of the company including sales, corporate marketing, communications, consumer experience, product development, claims operations, customer service, billing and enrollment, data analytics and technology. Previously, Dillard served as chief financial officer for eight years. He currently serves on the boards of Life & Specialty Ventures, US Able Corporation and HMO Partners. He and his wife Elizabeth ('91), have three children. He also serves as an elder at Levy Church of Christ in North Little Rock, Arkansas.



## **Leanna Epple**

**Topic: “Faith Under Fire”**

**11 a.m. | Room 107**

Leanna Epple ('12) graduated from Harding with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing. She is a seasoned marketing professional with extensive experience in event and product marketing. She has a passion for creating meaningful connections and driving results in the corporate world.

Epple's resume includes titles such as account manager and business development representative, but she is most proud of her work as trade show manager and new store opener. In these roles, she led product rotation and styling for six brands across nine showrooms nationwide and opened retail stores across the country.

In 2024, Epple faced some of the most significant challenges of her life, including a devastating house fire and simultaneous job loss. These experiences tested her resilience, but it is her deep faith that provides the strength and perspective needed to continue to navigate these trials. Outside of work, Epple enjoys spending time with her nieces and nephews, free-lancing in floral design, picking up a new hobby, or planning her next trip.



## **Taylor Farris**

**Topic: “The Anatomy of a Job: Finding Your Fit in the Real World”**

**11 a.m. | Room 110**

Taylor Farris ('14) graduated with a bachelors' in accounting and finance from Harding. She is currently a program manager in Walmart's Global Talent & Learning organization overseeing the implementation of skills-based practices for the company. Previously, she participated in a mission internship in Peru and worked at Heifer International in their accounting office. During her 10 years at Walmart, she has held various finance and human resources roles covering internal audit, associate college programs, digital learning applications and career navigation tools. The last four years have been focused on career mobility for associates and implementing tech solutions to enable Walmart to discover talent within the company.

She and her husband of eight years, Alex, live in Rogers, Arkansas. They have a dog, Huckleberry and a son, Finnegan. Over the past three years, the Farris family has opened their home to more than 30 children in foster care which gave them eyes to see the needs of their community as well as a heart for meeting them.



## **Alex Finley**

**Topic: “He Prepares. You Walk.”**

**1 p.m. | Room 107**

Alex Finley ('13) graduated from Harding with bachelor's degrees in economics and finance and completed an MBA at Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. He joined LeadsOnline in 2019 as director of strategy and has served as CEO since 2021. LeadsOnline is a trusted provider of data, technology and intelligence tools to U.S. and global law enforcement agencies. LeadsOnline's solutions make it possible for investigators to find people, property and patterns in criminal cases, and regularly prove instrumental to solve gun crime, violent crime, missing persons, property crimes and more. As CEO, Finley has led four strategic acquisitions to expand the company's product portfolio, team and geographic footprint. Today, the company serves more than 5,000 U.S. law enforcement agencies and global public safety organizations in nearly 80 countries. LeadsOnline was founded in 2000 and is headquartered in Plano, Texas and Montreal, Quebec.

Prior to LeadsOnline, Finley held several strategic roles in corporate finance in the U.S. and China. He and his wife, Tori, have two children, Grace and Judah, and live in Texas.



## **Dave Finley**

**Topic: “Moments that Matter”**

**11 a.m. | Room 101**

Dave Finley ('87) serves as owner and board member of LeadsOnline, LLC, a leading provider of software services used for criminal investigations among law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and in 80 countries around the world. The company of more than 300 team members helps law enforcement agencies advance their cases faster — including thefts, homicides and, particularly, gun crimes. LeadsOnline contributes daily to the arrest of criminals. Finley is a company advisor as well as assisting other business owners and nonprofit organizations.

Dave graduated from Harding with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing and holds a Master of Business Administration from Texas A&M University. He and his wife, Deb, have three children and three grandchildren.



## **Dr. Phil Goad**

**Topic: “A Christian Perspective on Business and Wealth”**

**1 p.m. | Room 112**

Dr. Phil Goad ('77) earned a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Harding and a doctorate in interdisciplinary toxicology from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in 1982. He co-founded CTEH, an environmental consulting firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. After retiring, he helped form Every Child Arkansas — a coalition of nearly 30 private organizations involved in foster care and adoption across the state — and serves as chair of the executive leadership council. He and his wife, Starla, have partnered in marriage ministry, humbly sharing their own struggles with others and leading them to build strong relationships on the foundation of Christ. They have blessed hundreds of couples through retreats hosted on their own property and around the world. They have also cared for orphans and vulnerable children through foster care and adoption organizations across the United States and in Zambia and Ethiopia. The Goads have three children and 10 grandchildren.

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## **Michael Hickmon Entrepreneur Highlights**

**2 p.m. | Room 114**

Michael Hickmon graduated from Harding and is an executive with more than a decade of experience in mergers, acquisitions and business integrations across various industries including plastics manufacturing, oil and gas, foodservice, coffee, tea and liquid extracts. As CEO of Arcane, he plays a pivotal role in setting and managing strategic and operational initiatives for the company and its subsidiaries. As Arcane continues to grow and reshape industries, Hickmon remains committed to leading in reshoring American manufacturing, expanding services across industries and leveraging combined capabilities and scale to serve customers in new sectors. With a focus on growth, innovation and reshaping American manufacturing, he continues to drive Arcane's success in the market. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his wife, twin daughters and goldendoodles.

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## **Rees Jones**

**Topic: “Your Habits Become Your Destiny”**

**2 p.m. | Room 101**

Rees Jones ('04) graduated from Harding with a Bachelor of Business Administration in marketing and holds a Master of Business Administration as well as two graduate degrees from banking schools hosted at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, Tennessee and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. Beginning his career as a part-time teller at Simmons Bank in Searcy, he has now served there for 20 years. He held various titles including teller, loan assistant, lending trainee, commercial lender, senior lending manager and commercial team manager before assuming the role of market president in 2018 and managing his market to 65% growth in the past six years.

Jones has served the community as a former president and campaign chair of the United Way of White County, board member at Jacob's Place and chair of the advisory board at Midnight Oil. He is also co-chairperson of the Leadership Searcy committee within the Chamber of Commerce and a Commissioner of the Searcy A&P Board. He and his wife, Shanna, have three sons, Brodie, Baker and Benny.

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## **Austin Lowery Entrepreneur Highlights**

**2 p.m. | Room 114**

Austin Lowery ('15) is a senior-level executive with more than eight years of broad financial and operational expertise in various manufacturing industries. He initially gained his experience from working with various companies performing consulting, valuation, and tax and auditing services and has since moved to the private sector and holds a CFO role in manufacturing.

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## **Mark Moore Entrepreneur Highlights**

**11 a.m. | Room 114**

Mark Moore ('90) is co-founder of MANA Nutrition, one of the world's leading suppliers of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food, the front line defense against severe acute malnutrition. Mana employs more than 130 people and supplies partners such as UNICEF, the World Food Program, World Vision, Doctors without Borders and USAID to aid in their efforts in fighting malnutrition in more than 50 countries across the globe. Previously, Moore lived and worked as a missionary for ten years in Uganda, East Africa, where he co-founded the KiboGroup, and he is involved in the growing mission of Midnight Oil Coffee House in Searcy.

He holds a bachelor's degree in public relations from Harding, a master's from Georgetown University and a doctorate from Vanderbilt University. He served as a legislative fellow and Africa specialist in the U.S. Senate in the office of Senator Mary Landrieu, and is also a graduate of Harvard's Senior Executive Fellows program and author of Nourish. He and his wife, Marnie, have four children and live in Charlotte, North Carolina.



## **Bret Raymond Entrepreneur Highlights**

**10 a.m. | Room 114**

Bret Raymond ('90) is co-founder and CEO of The Pack Shack, a nonprofit that supplies provisions and opportunities for neighbors in need. More than 225,000 people have packed more than 52 million meals at Feed the Funnell parties. He is also general manager of Neighborly Food Co., a manufacturer that produces a variety of healthy, hearty meals and donates 100% of profits to organizations that address food insecurity. Raymond has served in executive roles in nonprofit food manufacturing in Rwanda, textile manufacturing in northwest China, and business continuity consulting in Europe and South America. He has developed locally sustainable businesses in Uganda and is a partner in a macadamia enterprise in Burundi. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Harding and an MBA from Pepperdine University. He and his wife of 28 years, Johnna Duke Raymond ('96) have three children.

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## **Kelby Tansey**

**Topic: "Rhythms of Success: Setting Habits to Shape Your Future"**

**1 p.m. | Room 101**

Kelby Tansey ('16) currently serves as senior manager of recruitment marketing and talent acquisition operations at Dallas-based Southwest Airlines, the nation's largest domestic airline. During her seven-year tenure at Southwest, she has served in various roles in talent acquisition building and scaling the recruitment marketing function, driving innovation and achieving key business results across the entire hiring lifecycle. The teams she leads are responsible for recruitment marketing, employer brand, candidate experience, TA standards, market and candidate insights, and candidate pre-boarding. In 2022, she was awarded the prestigious Southwest Airlines President's Award, the highest honor a Southwest Employee can receive. She holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Harding, where she serves on the Women of Faith Advisory Board. She and her husband of eight years, Jake ('15), live in North Richland Hills, Texas, and have two children, Patrick and McKella.

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## **Mark Weeks**

**Topic: "The Ultimate Edge in Business"**

**11 a.m. | Room 112**

Mark Weeks ('85) is the founder of Woodmark Associates, LLC., an investment management company based in Brentwood, Tennessee. Previously, he was the senior vice president of finance and controller for CVS Caremark Rx, Inc. He led multi-office departments responsible for accounting, financial reporting and specialty pharmacy third party reimbursement. Prior to working with CVS Caremark Rx, Inc., he was a senior manager in the audit practice of Ernst & Young. Mark Weeks graduated from Harding with bachelor's degrees in accounting and computer science and earned a Master of Business Administration from Vanderbilt University's Owen School of Management. He is a CPA and a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

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## **Mike Williams**

**Topic: "Inspired Leadership"**

**1 p.m. | Room 110**

Dr. Michael D. Williams is the sixth president of Harding University. He served as president of Faulkner University from 2015 to 2022 and led the institution through a time of tremendous growth and progress. A significant achievement of his presidency was the creation of the College of Health Sciences and the launch of a state-of-the-art autism center. Williams' professional career includes leadership in enrollment management at Harding from 1987 to 2003. In 2003, he was appointed vice president for university advancement, and two fundraising campaigns exceeded their goals during his tenure.

Williams earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and a Master of Business Administration from the Paul R. Carter College of Business Administration at Harding and a doctorate in higher education management from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. He and his wife of 35 years, Lisa ('89), have two sons, Quentin and Cade ('20), a daughter-in-law, Cailin ('20), and a granddaughter, Loré Jane.

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## **Cordell Zalenski**

**Topic: "A Different Perspective on Work as a Follower of Christ"**

**10 a.m. | Room 101**

Cordell Zalenski ('16) is senior finance manager for Sam's Club and supports the meat and seafood merchandise business. He is also a licensed CPA.

He graduated from Harding with a bachelor's degree in accounting and was a two-time team football captain. He helped lead the Bisons to their first undefeated regular season, first outright GAC championship, first home playoff game and win, and first away playoff win. He worships and serves at the Bentonville Church of Christ, leading Sunday evening services, teaching Bible classes, serving as a church camp counselor, and leading a small group. He and his wife, Chelsi, have one child, Kallen, and are expecting their second.

# SCHEDULE

CARTER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



	Room 101	Room 107	Room 110	Room 111	Room 112	Room 114
<b>10 a.m.</b>	<p>Cordell Zalenski</p> <p>A Different Perspective on Work as a Follower of Christ</p>	<p>Ron Chase</p> <p>What It Takes to be a Successful Entrepreneur</p>	<p>Mark Crews</p> <p>Integrity Ain't Easy: Stories from Working in the Gray Zones</p>	<p>COBA CHAT: What Matters?</p> <p>Leanna Eppelle Taylor Farris Alex Finley Rees Jones</p>	<p>Gray Dillard</p> <p>Blueprint for Success... Depending on your Definition</p>	<p>Entrepreneur Highlights</p> <p>Bret Raymond</p>
<b>11 a.m.</b>	<p>Dave Finley</p> <p>Moments that Matter</p>	<p>Leanna Eppelle</p> <p>Faith Under Fire</p>	<p>Taylor Farris</p> <p>The Anatomy of a Job: Finding Your Fit in the Real World</p>	<p>COBA CHAT: What Are Our Responsibilities?</p> <p>Adriana Archila Gray Dillard Kelby Tansey Cordell Zalenski</p>	<p>Mark Weeks</p> <p>The Ultimate Edge in Business</p>	<p>Entrepreneur Highlights</p> <p>Mark Moore</p>
<b>1 p.m.</b>	<p>Kelby Tansey</p> <p>Rhythms of Success: Setting Habits to Shape Your Future</p>	<p>Alex Finley</p> <p>He Prepares. You Walk.</p>	<p>Mike Williams</p> <p>Inspired Leadership</p>	<p>COBA CHAT Entrepreneurship</p> <p>Mark Moore Bret Raymond</p>	<p>Dr. Phil Goad</p> <p>A Christian Perspective on Business and Wealth</p>	
<b>2 p.m.</b>	<p>Rees Jones</p> <p>Your Habits Become Your Destiny</p>	<p>Adriana Archila</p> <p>Am I Qualified for the Job?</p>				<p>Entrepreneur Highlights</p> <p>Michael Hickmon Austin Lowery</p>