

INSIDE: FAVORITE BOOKS OF 2015

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**25 SMALL-  
BUSINESS  
DREAMS**

THE IDEAS THAT  
SPARKED THE  
REALITIES

**MAIN  
STREET  
AMERICA**

## INFLUENTIAL

**6 MEN AND WOMEN  
WHO SHAPE  
THE MIDSTATE**

THE CHIEF OF POLICE, THE SUPERINTENDENT,  
THE COACH, THE MEDIA PRESIDENT,  
THE NONPROFIT DIRECTOR AND THE CULTURAL FOUNDER

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**GIFT GUIDE 2015**

THINKING OUTSIDE  
THE BOX FOR WHAT TO  
PUT INSIDE THE BOX

# INFLUENTIA

WORDS BY M. DIANE MCCORMICK,  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KELLY ANN SHULER

## THOMAS CARTER CHIEF, HARRISBURG BUREAU OF POLICE

When young Tom Carter passed the test to become a Harrisburg police officer, another officer told him, "You're from Harrisburg. You'll be doing favors. You know too many people."

Today, Chief Thomas Carter's "you know too many people" approach is considered a model of effective policing. The native of Steelton who moved to Harrisburg at age 8 has worked his entire career in the Harrisburg Bureau of Police.

"It's funny how things have swung around," he says. "They want people from the community to be police officers."

Carter grew up idolizing his father, a decorated Army veteran of the Korean War. He enjoyed cop shows – the procedural *Hawaii Five-0*, the sitcom *Barney Miller*.

"I always liked to know who did what," he says. "I always liked the chase, when it comes to solving crime and hunting down bad guys. I liked to solve things."

He also grew up seeing police officers who wouldn't engage with citizens. They would make arrests and refuse explanations, telling family members to shut up, get out or "I'm taking you next." Did they act that way for a reason? He wanted to learn more.

He came to realize that cops could talk with families and citizens, but some simply "didn't want to. That shaped me. I didn't want to be that kind of police officer. I would engage people. I would explain why I was arresting them, what they did wrong."

"I wanted to make friends with people," he adds. "I didn't want to make enemies."

Officers make split-second decisions every second, he says. He doesn't judge the actions of police seen on the news because he wasn't in their shoes. But he tells his officers, "The greatest weapon you have is your mouth."

"Everything we do, we're judged by the public, and rightfully so, because we work for the public," he says. He is proud that his officers have been face-to-face with gunmen and didn't pull the trigger to avoid endangering innocent citizens.

Carter and his officers are often in schools, handing out trinkets and advice.

"We're trying to change the image of police officers so our youth will feel safe talking to police. We don't want to be strangers."

He has a habit of repeating phrases for emphasis. "We don't want to be strangers."

He never aspired to be chief and even considered retirement while heading the department's Criminal

Investigation Division. His appointment as acting chief by former Mayor Linda Thompson and retention by Mayor Eric Papenfuse have been "a blessing and an honor."

He has a message for area residents.

"With your help and support, I'm sure Harrisburg is going to get back to the prosperous city it used to be. The safe and prosperous city it used to be. Everything takes time." And then he adds, "Everything takes time."

## SYBIL KNIGHT-BURNEY SUPERINTENDENT, HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT

Teaching in a school for pregnant teens, young teacher Sybil Knight-Burney saw only mystified stares from her students. She turned her back and prayed for guidance. Then she turned to the girls and asked for forgiveness.

"How am I going to teach you if I judge you?" she asked them. "Let's get to know each other."

Before long, she learned the girls' stories of abuse at the hands of deacons and stepfathers. As they learned to trust her, she would tell them, "The best thing you can have that you own and can't be taken away from you is your education."

It was a lesson in empathy that Knight-Burney, now the superintendent of Harrisburg School District, has never forgotten. In education, "we come with our own backgrounds, our own perspective and narrow minds," she says now.


"What I want folks to understand is that I may not have everything that you have, and I may come from a different place, but that's no reason for you still not to have high expectations, and that's no reason for you not to challenge me to learn, and that's no reason not to give me every opportunity that I would have in another school," she says.

Knight-Burney came to Harrisburg by a circuitous route. The daughter of a teacher and a truck driver in Ft. Myers, Fla., getting bused to a "warm, caring" integrated school. Winner of a prestigious Golden Apple award, Florida's highest honor for teachers. Administrator at schools around Cambridge, Mass., including one where a student-led campaign to boot a 19th-Century scientist and racist from the school's name stirred controversy and created headlines.

"I think of my life as being a bridge builder, trying to make positive things happen, make things happen in a way that someone, somewhere can benefit from and bridge to possibilities," she says.

In her first years in Harrisburg, as assistant superintendent, Knight-Burney supervised social workers

# 6 MEN AND WOMEN WHO SHAPE THE MIDSTATE



Sybil Knight-Burney,  
superintendent, Harrisburg School District



and counselors for the first time. She had no social work background, but they helped her get to know the community, and she now sees "God's master plan at work."

"Sometimes, you don't know the reason why, and we're so shortsighted that we can only see what's right in front of us, but His plan is much, much larger than that," she says. "And sometimes, if we did know, we'd mess it up anyway."

As superintendent, Knight-Burney has led adoption of a standards-based curriculum, established learning academies and enhanced teacher professional development, even while she grapples with the challenges of educating students in a district where test scores are stubbornly low.

Knight-Burney strives for stability and community involvement to turn the ship around. She has worked with state lawmakers and officials to shape education policy. She is active in community service projects. Sundays, she is in church all day. She is mom to a 14-year-old daughter who, Knight-Burney notes, "keeps me centered. I get crazy ideas, and she says, 'Mom, do you really think that's the best decision, and have you prayed about it?'"

Through it all, she is focused on elevating prospects for students who are "hungry to learn."

"They're hungry to know. We have just got to figure out the right tools to give our students and raise that bar and work with them where they are and bring them up. That's what we try to instill every day."

### **TOM PEIFER COACH, RED LAND LITTLE LEAGUE TEAM**

What's the coolest thing about taking a bunch of exuberant 12-year-olds from tiny Lewisberry right up to the cusp of a Little League Baseball world championship?

"The people who don't follow sports that much but who come up to me and say, 'I never even watch baseball, but I watched every game,'" says Tom Peifer.

Before the summer of 2015, Peifer was a typical dad, raising a family, coaching sports, working his job. By summer's end, he was known as the coach of the Red Land Little League U.S. champs, unbeaten until the final bout against Japan in the Little League World Series.

He has a good sense of why the team captivated so many people, sports fans or not.

"It's the innocence of the boys," he says. "Them having fun. Everybody knows they're not getting paid. They're just doing it for the love of baseball and being around their teammates."

Peifer knows about championships, having played on Red Land High School's 1990 state championship baseball team. He started coaching the Red Land team when his son, Kaden Peifer, started playing.

For the most part, the boys who won the U.S. championship are the same who've been playing together since they were 7 or 8 years old, Peifer says. He and his coaching team try to instill that "there's a right way" to do things, but more important was the work the boys put in "when nobody's watching, when they're in the winter and going to work out."

"For people to see them at the level they saw, how their hard work paid off, playing at the highest level of Little League baseball, that was the most satisfying thing," he says.

The reaction to the boys' run to the world championship, back home in Central Pennsylvania and even statewide, was unexpected. Parades. Trips to the U.S. Capitol and the state Capitol. All-access visit with the Baltimore Orioles. Benefits for the Four Diamonds Fund.

The boys boosted Central Pennsylvania's sense of pride, Peifer says. They are "easy to relate to and cheer for and rally behind."

He and his wife, Amy Peifer, are busy with their two children. He's active in church, when time allows. He was always interested in medicine and worked six years as a nurse in

a surgical ICU at Penn State Hershey Medical Center before deciding that the hours for school nursing would dovetail with coaching.

He is back at his alma mater, the Red Land High School nurse whose office is decorated with football schedules and a poster saying, "It takes a real man to be a nurse."

Peifer doesn't worry much about his Little League boys, other than the possible disappointment when they play baseball in front of, say, 100 spectators and wonder, "Where are all the people?"

They are all good students and well-rounded. They all came back from the adulation of Williamsport "the same people they were before," but also with their horizons expanded by contact with new friends from Mexico, Uganda and, of course, Japan.

They've made it this far with the full support of their families, and he's confident they will find their ways in life, whatever they choose to do.

"These boys," he says, "will have a special place in my heart."

### **D. LEE CARLSON** PRESIDENT, PA MEDIA GROUP

Is the death knell sounding for the news business?

Not to D. Lee Carlson's ears.

"Newspapers nationwide have more feet on the street in their markets than anybody else," says Carlson, president of PA Media Group, which includes PennLive.com and the *Patriot-News*. "We really are the keepers of historical and current information. To me, it's only going to get better, because people will be able to access it however they want, whenever they want."

Carlson is a native Californian with a career trajectory in newspaper sales, classified advertising, marketing and publishing. She had moved to the East Coast, serving as publisher of NJBIZ, when the *Patriot-News* sought her as general manager in 2008. She couldn't pass up the opportunity because the culture at Newhouse publications, now Advance Publications, "was all about the people."

"We know that we are our talent," she says. "It's not a widget. It's what our people make of it."

The long-evolving decision to create a digitally focused multi-media company emerged as news consumers began demanding instant access to information in the formats of their choice. The few dollars saved, mostly on newsprint and delivery, were reinvested in content staff, Carlson says. Today, over 300,000 people view more than one million pages daily. Reporters and photographers are tweeting regularly.

Tom Peifer, coach,  
Red Land Little League team



D. Lee Carlson, president, PA Media Group



They're "getting deeper and deeper into Pinterest and Tumblr."

"It's a community," she says. "This is where you express yourself."

The result? Pulitzer Prize to the *Patriot-News* in 2012 for its Sandusky coverage. Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association's "Newspaper of the Year" six times in the last 10 years.

"We're doing the right thing," says Carlson. "Our journalistic approach has not suffered at all through any of this."

In Carlson's meticulous office, a gallery-worthy array of paintings in bright florals adorns the walls and even the windows. The "Keep Calm and Carry On" motif pops up occasionally.

"I'm a big believer in not overreacting, in putting out fires," she says. "If we say the sky is falling, we have a big impact on the world, on our community. It's important to approach things in a strategic, calm manner."

Carlson serves on the United Way of the Capital Region board to help ensure that "we live in a community that's healthy, where people don't have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, so they can be engaged in the community and make it better."

She has always served with industry organizations, including the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association board, because the business' "future is uncertain. We changed

so much in the past few years. I don't even know what we're going to look like in the next 10 years. I want to be part of that."

The news media will help future generations "navigate the world as it's changing so much. We're trying to give them information so they can use it to be a good community member and help us move forward."

And that, she says, is "why we get into it in the first place. Tell the stories that are important to tell, and don't let them get lost."

### MARY QUINN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YWCA OF GREATER HARRISBURG

The distraught father, sitting in the YWCA lobby, couldn't pay his day care bill because the child's mother had used the money to buy drugs. Mary Quinn was working with him on a solution when another woman approached. She was there for services because her daughter was on drugs, "and I know how it can destroy a family," the woman said. She gave the man the money to pay the bill.

"I'm sure that was a hardship for her," Quinn recalls. "When you have those moments when people are so kind and generous, it makes up for weeks of seeing a lot of bad stuff, too."

Quinn is the newly minted executive director of the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg, appointed to fill the post held by Tina

Nixon for 14 years. She had been the YW's vice president of operations for two years, gaining an insider's view of the organization whose mission is on the lapel pin she wears daily: "Eliminating Racism, Empowering Women." The two halves of the mission dovetail as women and racial minorities strive to break the cycles of poverty and reach for betterment, she says.

The Detroit-area native followed a brother to Harrisburg in 1998 and fell for the region's city vibe with a community feel. She was an assistant director for the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania before finding her way to the YW in search of "a sense of connection." She thought about women in other parts of the world who are blocked from going to school.

"I'm very aware of how lucky I am to live in a country where I don't have to worry about being educated," she says.

With her knowledge of the "nitty-gritty details" of YWCA programs, Quinn has embarked on a journey to better align funding with services and to instill an understanding of the mission throughout the community and within the organization itself.

Quinn grew up the daughter of a Ford autoworker and a stay-at-home mother who both taught her kindness and generosity. A long-distance runner, she serves on the

board of Girls on the Run, which develops self-esteem and wellness among girls by training them for an annual 5K run.

Quinn and her husband, Lennie Whitcomb, live in Uptown Harrisburg, enjoying runs by the river and jaunts to Little Amps Coffeehouse. Rupert is their rescue Yorkie mix.

"You wouldn't think that 12 pounds could rule the world," she says.

Since taking the charismatic Nixon's place, Quinn knows she has big shoes to fill. Her inborn strengths are organizational, and she has "quiet confidence" that her public presence will grow as she continues educating the community about the organization she wholly believes in. She is impressed with the city's growth and hopes to engage the Millennials who are revitalizing old institutions and embarking on new ventures.

She also hopes to continue building trust in the YWCA by making it "a shining example of diversion and inclusiveness."

"We'd like to be able to say, 'This is why you need diversity in your own organization. Here's what we did. Here are our missteps. Here's what we learned from that, but here's where we are today, and this has made us a stronger organization.'"

## CHEN-YU TSUEI FOUNDER, PRESIDENT AND INSTRUCTOR, CHINESE CULTURAL & ARTS INSTITUTE

With her prodigious talent in classical dance, Chen-Yu Tsuei trained at the prestigious Juilliard School. So why, people ask, isn't she in a big city making lots of money?

She answers by sharing a Chinese idiom.

"A man of great talents will surely be given important assignments."

At the Chinese Cultural & Arts Institute, teachers, students and parents treat each other like family. They support each other. They even rose to global competition in a Chinese-language drama competition.

"Just think, a small nonprofit 'in the middle of nowhere' beat the New York competition and may just beat the worldwide competition," she says. "Harrisburg does have a vibrant arts scene."

Tsuei is founder and president of the Chinese Cultural and Arts Institute (CCAI). From a studio tucked among warehouses off Derry Street, she oversees a nonprofit dedicated to teaching Chinese dance, language, painting and calligraphy, Tai Chi and other arts.

Tsuei grew up in Taiwan, the daughter of a military officer. With her grandmother, she

learned about Chinese culture and watched Chinese opera, because "that's what she loved the most." She started dancing at 5. By middle school, she was accepted into newly created arts schools that exposed her to world-class ballet training.

She was in the U.S., staying with her sister, when one of her former teachers, the director of a Dutch dance company, insisted that she find a good college for dance studies. It was late August. He called back and told her she had an audition at Juilliard on September 1. Except it wasn't an audition; it was a placement test. Tsuei was already in, on a full scholarship.

She knew little English, and the repetitive work of dance training was as draining mentally as it was physically. While at Juilliard, she worked in the costume shop and the library, getting a glimpse into the resources and backstage work that supports the arts. After graduation, she pursued a master's in arts administration from Drexel University.

"I still liked to dance," she says now, "but I felt like I should do something else."

A call came from the president of the Central Pennsylvania Chinese Association, asking her to teach a dance to non-dancers for a Chinese New Year's event. To support herself while she did the unpaid job, she worked for the state. At an international trade conference in Valley Forge, her ride there left her stranded. She got a ride back with Bill Hubler, then a state trade representative. That ride led to a first date, at Chocolate World, and to marriage. Today, Hubler is an integral part of CCAI.

Tsuei was still teaching dance to Chinese Association members when the parents of children adopted from China started calling. Could she teach dance to their kids? She wondered why she would teach Chinese dance here in America, but she began to realize that the children were so good and their hearts so open to learning that she should share her knowledge.

CCAI was founded in 2000. It has helped engage the community and the Mid-Atlantic region not in Chinese politics or headlines but in a culture that is 5,000 years old.

CCAI has started a capital campaign, hoping to build a Chinese cultural center and Chinatown business district that promotes cultural education and exchange. The new facility will expand CCAI's reach to a larger audience, but a core mission will remain the same - to develop confidence in children.

"You have this ability," Tsuei tells her students. "You can do what you want to do. It's not just for the culture. It's for your life." ©

