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Opelika Living



BLAKE AND
TRACI HENRY

SETTING THE PACE

Photos By Kate Gwin -
Haint Blue Collective



Best Version Media

BLAKE AND TRACI HENRY

SETTING THE PACE



Like so many residents in Lee County and like so many of our neighbors who did not grow up in this area, the first visit was all we needed to realize we found the right spot.

For Blake Henry, originally from Indianapolis and then a high school graduate from Florida, he was set for a college career he thought would be in Tallahassee.

"My mom was familiar with Auburn, and obviously, I had heard about it through sports and things like that, but she brought my older sister up here on a college visit," Blake said. "She was going to go to school here with a friend from Indiana, but at the last minute, her boyfriend at the time, now her husband, said he was going to Ole Miss, so she followed him there."

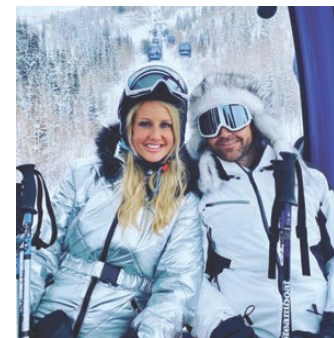
"My mom had taken a liking to Auburn, and was insistent that I visit there. I was reluctant but agreed," Blake said. "As soon as I got into town, I was like, 'that's it, that's where I'm going.' I liked the small college town feel, and once I got up here, I knew I would never leave."

Blake did leave for a short time after graduating from Auburn with a degree in finance in 1998. He was living in Montgomery when he met Traci, a Montgomery native, in 2000. She graduated from Jeff Davis High School and earned a Marketing degree from Troy State University Montgomery.

After she finished school, the couple moved to Auburn in 2002. They just celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary last month. They are veterans in their respective industries, Blake in Finance and Traci in Pharmaceuticals and Personal Training.

Blake started in banking right after he graduated. While working professionally, he also worked on his Graduate degree from the Barrett School of Banking in Memphis. In 2009, he graduated, and at about that time, he moved into investment consulting.

"I got into banking from the get-go and did that for about ten years, and during the financial crisis, I got out of banking into this business," he quipped. "I always joked around and said banking wasn't volatile enough and decided to give this a go."



Blake founded Railroad Investment Group in 2018 with his office in Downtown Opelika. It has been a perfect fit, and the times remain volatile.

"I like to work with people and to help people," Blake said. "This is kind of our Super Bowl. We think of ourselves as the financial first-responders, and that's when we're needed, during the times like this, to hold people's hand and make sure they don't make the wrong decision to derail their financial plan."

If you ask Traci, Blake knows a lot about pace. He is an avid runner, and he has qualified for and completed the Boston Marathon. In addition to completing 11 full marathons, Blake has also completed numerous triathlons, including two full Ironmans.

"The patience, the discipline, and the commitment it takes to train for that type of competition translate into the job that he does now," Traci says.

Traci and Blake didn't necessarily plan on the new home they built in 2013 at the National Village.

"We took a Sunday drive out there, and we just really liked the feel," he said. "It's very relaxed, we like the lakes, the scenery, and the trails, and the day we went to look, we signed the dotted line that day for our lot, and that was that."

It turns out that was also the perfect place for Traci's studio, and her new personal training business. The basement of their new home was the ideal opportunity to transition to after years of teaching and training at the SportsPlex in Opelika and at Gold's Gym. It was also the perfect space for their Peloton Bike and Tread. "We are obsessed with them," Traci says.

It wasn't long after they moved in that Blake and Traci welcomed a new neighbor.

"My mom is a great designer and decorator. She visited a couple of times, and she liked the feel of the neighborhood and the entire area in general," Blake said. "In 2015, she decided to move here too."





Even though Traci and Blake have lived in their new home for many years, they have never stopped moving. "We love to travel, that's what we do," Traci said. "That's our baby. We love to explore the world."

The Caribbean is at the top of their list of favorite destinations. But the South Pacific was one of those trips of a lifetime for them.

"We took one of our bucket-list trips last year to Bora Bora, and we stayed in one of the over-the-water bungalows, it was amazing," Traci said.

As places begin to re-open, they are anxious to get back on a plane. Traci and Blake plan to visit Las Vegas sometime in July.

They are members of First United Methodist Church in Opelika and the Samford Society at Auburn University. They are also sponsors and season ticket holders at the new Gogue Performing Arts Center.

The beautiful scenery, the university, and the wonderful neighborhoods are a big part of what makes living here so special for Blake and Traci, but they say it always comes back to the people.

"This day and age, it's hard anymore to find that small-town community feel, where people are truly interested in one another and are trying to help one another," Blake said.

It was a little over 25-years ago when Blake's mom encouraged him to visit for school. Proof, they say, that it remains a very special place, or "just the right spot."

WONDER.S

you can find at the Kreher Preserve & Nature Center!

ACTIAS LUNA, better known as the luna moth, is one of the largest moths in the southeast. Adults, like the one pictured, emerge in spring or summer and live only 7 to 10 days, during which time they will lay between 200 and 400 eggs. Like most moths, luna moths are active during the night and usually find a quiet place to rest during the day – which could be your patio or deck! This one was spotted at the Kreher Preserve & Nature Center's main pavilion.

For More Information: auburn.edu/preserve



Submitted by Michael Buckman / Manager, Kreher Preserve & Nature Center | COMMUNITY

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a neighbor who has a story to share?

Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at vhodges@bestversionmedia.com

Lee County Humane Society

Pet Corner

THIS SWEET MAMA just wants to be by your side at all times. Kimeo has been in our care for almost 100 days and is wishing she finds her forever home soon. She enjoys relaxing outside in the sun and is trying her best to learn a few tricks. (She just needs a little encouragement at times.) You can tell she's just a big lap dog and will find any way she can to touch you. She's been in play groups and does well with other dogs her size! (She also loves head scratches!) Kimeo is 2 years old, spayed, vaccinated, and microchipped. She is also heartworm negative and only \$25 to adopt. If you're looking for a lovebug to join your family, apply online today to meet her!

By Vince Hodges | Photos By Kate Gwin - Haint Blue Collective | RESIDENT FEATURE

By T.J. McCullough - Shelter Director | PET CORNER