

# SIUE alumni named to BizJournal's Elite 40 Under 40 List

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EDWARDSVILLE - Two Southern Illinois University Edwardsville alumni are among the rising leaders named to the St. Louis Business Journal's exclusive 40 Under 40 Class of 2019. The annual list showcases St. Louis area movers and shakers in both business and the community.

Among the honorees are alumni Lissa Johnson-Lewis and Ryan Perryman. Johnson earned a bachelor's in business administration from the SIUE School of Business in 2010. She's assistant brand manager for Nestle Purina Pet Care.

"I am extremely humbled and honored to join such an elite group of emerging leaders in the St. Louis area," Johnson-Lewis said. "The hard work I do in both my community

and in business is never for recognition, but because I truly care about making the community and my company a better place.”

In her current role, Johnson-Lewis leads a cross-functional team to commercialize all renovation and innovation projects from concept testing, through development to commercialization. This includes overseeing digital media strategy, analyzing and interpreting sales, category and market trends, developing promotional programs and overseeing brand budgets.

Johnson-Lewis’s academic journey at SIUE fostered her passion for marketing. A fellow alumnus helped her secure a marketing internship during her junior year. That opportunity transpired into a full-time offer at Edward Jones upon graduation.

Long-term, Johnson-Lewis sees herself founding a non-profit organization that stems from her love for travel.

“Growing up, I recall not being afforded the opportunity to travel and learn about other cities and countries,” she explained. “My goal is to start a non-profit organization that provides underprivileged youth with cross-cultural experiences, exposes them to foreign languages and provides them with leadership skills to be successful in our global economy.”

Fellow honoree Perryman earned a bachelor’s in construction management from the SIUE School of Engineering in 2004. He is vice president of building at L. Keeley Construction.

“I am honored to be recognized among these recipients,” Perryman said. “Their service to the community and impact within their organization is impressive and humbling.”

Perryman leads L. Keeley Construction Building Group’s team of business development, design, pre-construction and operations personnel through operational oversight, process improvement, training/education and strategic planning functions.

“My professional goals are to deliver wealth to my team (coworkers, clients, subcontractors/suppliers and family) and inspire others to take action by leading with honesty, respect, commitment and passion,” explained Perryman.

He credits faculty in the SIUE Department of Construction with thoroughly preparing him for a successful career, and offering ample networking and experiential opportunities during his studies.

“Faculty and staff maintained tremendous relationships with the construction and engineering community,” Perryman said. “As a result, as students, we were able to network with decision makers and develop relationships early in our studies. These opportunities enabled me to work in my field of study for the duration of my college career, enhancing my classroom learning and galvanizing my passion for the industry.”

Perryman remains an active proponent for SIUE’s continued growth and success as a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors and the School of Engineering Advisory Board. Perryman also earned SIUE’s 2017 Construction Leadership Institute Alumni Leadership Award, in recognition of his exceptional leadership and service to the St. Louis area building community.

“SIUE has had a significant impact on my life,” he said. “I was fortunate to earn the Chancellor’s Scholarship (now Meridian) which paid for my education. I found a great program of study that helped prepare me for my career and provided a network that I continue to benefit from. I was also blessed with finding the love of my life right across from my room in Prairie Hall my freshman year.”

“Remaining an active alumnus is a way for me to start giving back to a place that has given me so much,” he concluded.

The St. Louis Business Journal will feature the 40 Under 40 Class of 2019 in its Friday, Feb. 8 issue. The influencers will be honored during a dinner being held Wednesday, Feb. 13 at the St. Louis Marriott Grand Hotel.

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.

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Photo: (L-R) SIUE alumni featured on the BizJournal's 40 Under 40 Class of 2019 list are Lissa Johnson-Lewis and Ryan Perryman.