

Julie Lawton ends directorship of Homewood business group

BY NICK ULANOWSKI
nulanowski@hfchronicle.com

Julie Lawton, co-owner of the UpsaDaisey boutique shop, has stepped down from her role as director of the Homewood Business Association. Starting in July, the new director will be Lisa Komorowski, co-owner of the boutique shop Loulou Belle. Komorowski will be assisted by Loulou Belle co-owner Dodi Wians.

The Homewood Business Association is a way for small businesses in Homewood to come together and be a part of a community organization that can serve their interests. The HBA markets and promotes small businesses in Homewood, posts fliers around town and hosts fundraising events for non-profit organizations.

Any small business in Homewood can join the HBA by paying an annual fee. Members meet once a month.

"The money that we raise through membership, or any kind of fundraising, goes right back to our businesses. [The HBA] was set up specifically to help small businesses in this town," Lawton said. "All of this is volunteer work. So, I don't get paid for what I do. None of the board members get paid for what they do."

"You sometimes feel very isolated as one individual owner. So, it's great to have the connection with other business owners," said Wians who founded the organization.

Lawton has been the director of the Homewood Business Association for about five years, she said. It was previously called the Downtown Homewood Business Association. Lawton said she had "downtown" removed from HBA's name to make the organization more inclusive to small businesses in Homewood that aren't in the downtown area.

Under her leadership, the HBA also started having a membership coordinator tasked with recruiting new members, Lawton said. Today the HBA is a bigger organization with more local businesses involved.

"There's probably three times [as many members] as what we had back then – or more," Lawton said.

Allisa Opyd, events manager for the Village of Homewood, said Lawton's leadership is responsible for much of the "beautiful community artwork around the downtown," including decorated benches and other artwork. Opyd said public art in Homewood has "really grown in the last few years because of Julie taking that initiative and working with the not-for-profits."

Lawton said she's stepping down because she's moving to the South, most likely South Carolina. She said she's always planned on eventually moving to a warmer climate. Lawton said with her kids gone off to college, she's able to make the move.

"I've been in this town for 25 years. I've loved every minute of it," Lawton said. "I want to see this community succeed and grow and do all the great things it's been doing."

UpsaDaisey will remain in downtown Homewood, Lawton said. It will be managed by Lawton's co-owners, Suzy Moore and Julie Smith.

Lawton said she approached Komorowski and Wians about taking over as director of the HBA. Komorowski accepted the role.

"I've been involved in the HBA for six years now, and I've watched it grow for six years," Komorowski said. "I think I have a pretty good idea of where I see it going for the next 10, 20 years."



Nick Ulanowski/H-F Chronicle

Julie Lawton, co-owner of UpsaDaisey boutique, will be relocating. She's stepped down as director of the Homewood Business Association.

kids @ college STEAMagination Camp

SESSION 1: MONDAY, JUNE 20 - FRIDAY, JUNE 24
SESSION 2: MONDAY, JULY 18 - FRIDAY, JULY 22

TO STIMULATE CREATIVITY AND INSPIRE
CHILDREN TO REACH FOR THE STARS!

LEARN MORE

Prairie State College
Start near. Go far. Stay safe.

www.prairiestate.edu/kids

Ravisloe Country Club a Donald Ross Facility



Donald Ross, renown Scottish architect, put his stamp on Ravisloe Country Club from 1916 to 1920.

He changed the course into a tougher, more demanding course, worthy of the skills of all levels of golfers.

This tribute to Donald Ross was created by Bill Baker of 'Top Notch Chainsaw Carvings'. The Siberian Elm has been a sentinel outside our clubhouse for over 100 years.

Using old photos, Bill Baker recreated this iconic pose of Donald Ross to greet every patron upon their arrival to Ravisloe.



*We hope you enjoy Donald Ross'
"Return to Ravisloe"
April, 2022*